





John P. Scott

POEMS

BY

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

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POEMS

BY

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES



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TO MY READERS.

NAY, blame me not ; I might have spared
Your patience many a trivial verse,
Yet these my earlier welcome shared,
So, let the better shield the worse.

And some might say, " Those ruder songs
Had freshness which the new have lost ;
To spring the opening leaf belongs,
The chestnut-burs await the frost."

When those I wrote, my locks were brown,
When these I write—ah, well-a-day !
The autumn thistle's silvery down
Is not the purple bloom of May !

Go, little book, whose pages hold
Those garnered years in loving trust ;
How long before your blue and gold
Shall fade and whiten in the dust ?

O sexton of the alcoved tomb,
Where souls in leathern cerements lie,
Tell me each living poet's doom !
How long before his book shall die ?

It matters little, soon or late,
A day, a month, a year, an age,—
I read oblivion in its date,
And Finis on its title-page.

Before we sighed, our griefs were told ;
Before we smiled, our joys were sung ;
And all our passions shaped of old
In accents lost to mortal tongue.

In vain a fresher mould we seek, —
Can all the varied phrases tell
That Babel's wandering children speak,
How thrushes sing or lilacs smell ?

Caged in the poet's lonely heart,
Love wastes unheard its tenderest tone ;
The soul that sings must dwell apart,
Its inward melodies unknown.

Deal gently with us, ye who read !
Our largest hope is unfulfilled, —
The promise still outruns the deed, —
The tower, but not the spire, we build.

Our whitest pearl we never find ;
Our ripest fruit we never reach ;
The flowering moments of the mind
Drop half their petals in our speech.

These are my blossoms ; if they wear
One streak of morn or evening's glow,
Accept them ; but to me more fair
The buds of song that never blow.

April 8, 1862.

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EARLIER POEMS.

1830-1836.



OLD IRONSIDES.

AY, tear her tattered ensign down !
Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see
That banner in the sky ;
Beneath it rung the battle shout,
And burst the cannon's roar ;—
The meteor of the ocean air
Shall sweep the clouds no more !

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,
Where knelt the vanquished foe,
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,
And waves were white below,
No more shall feel the victor's tread,
Or know the conquered knee ;—
The harpies of the shore shall pluck
The eagle of the sea !

Oh better that her shattered hulk
Should sink beneath the wave ;
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
And there should be her grave ;
Nail to the mast her holy flag,
Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale !

THE LAST LEAF.

I SAW him once before,
As he passed by the door,
And again
The pavement stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground
With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
Cut him down,
'Not a better man was found
By the Crier on his round
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets
Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
"They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
 In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
 On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said—
Poor old lady, she is dead
 Long ago—
That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
 In the snow.

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
 Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
 In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
 At him here ;
But the old three-cornered hat,
And the breeches, and all that,
 Are so queer !

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
 In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
 Where I cling.

THE CAMBRIDGE CHURCHYARD.

OUR ancient church ! its lowly tower,
 Beneath the loftier spire,
Is shadowed when the sunset hour
 Clothes the tall shaft in fire ;
It sinks beyond the distant eye,
 Long ere the glittering vane,
High wheeling in the western sky,
 Has faded o'er the plain.

Like Sentinel and Nun, they keep
 Their vigil on the green ;
One seems to guard, and one to weep,
 The dead that lie between ;
And both roll out, so full and near,
 Their music's mingling waves,
They shake the grass, whose pennoned spear
 Leans on the narrow graves.

The stranger parts the flaunting weeds,
 Whose seeds the winds have strown
So thick beneath the line he reads,
 They shade the sculptured stone ;
The child unveils his clustered brow,
 And ponders for a while
The graven willow's pendent bough,
 Or rudest cherub's smile.

But what to them the dirge, the knell ?
 These were the mourner's share ;
The sullen clang, whose heavy swell
 Throbb'd through the beating air ;

The rattling cord,—the rolling stone,—
The shelving sand that slid,
And, far beneath, with hollow tone,
Rung on the coffin's lid.

The slumberer's mound grows fresh and green,
Then slowly disappears ;
The mosses creep, the gray stones lean,
Earth hides his date and years ;
But, long before the once-loved name
Is sunk or worn away,
No lip the silent dust may claim,
That pressed the breathing clay.

Go where the ancient pathway guides,
See where our sires laid down
Their smiling babes, their cherished brides,
The patriarchs of the town ;
Hast thou a tear for buried love ?
A sigh for transient power ?
All that a century left above,
Go, read it in an hour !

The Indian's shaft, the Briton's ball,
The sabre's thirsting edge,
The hot shell, shattering in its fall,
The bayonet's rending wedge,—
Here scattered death ; yet, seek the spot,
No trace thine eye can see,
No altar,—and they need it not
Who leave their children free !

Look where the turbid rain-drops stand
In many a chiselled square ;

The knightly crest, the shield, the brand
Of honoured names were there ;—
Alas ! for every tear is dried
Those blazoned tablets knew,
Save when the icy marble's side
Drips with the evening dew.

Or gaze upon yon pillared stone,
The empty urn of pride ;
There stand the Goblet and the Sun,—
What need of more beside ?
Where lives the memory of the dead,
Who made their tomb a toy ?
Whose ashes press that nameless bed ?
Go, ask the village boy !

Lean o'er the slender western wall,
Ye ever-roaming girls ;
The breath that bids the blossom fall
May lift your floating curls,
To sweep the simple lines that tell
An exile's date and doom ;
And sigh, for where his daughters dwell,
They wreathe the stranger's tomb.

And one amid these shades was born,
Beneath this turf who lies,
Once beaming as the summer's morn,
That closed her gentle eyes ;
If sinless angels love as we,
Who stood thy grave beside,
Three seraph welcomes waited thee,
The daughter, sister, bride !

I wandered to thy buried mound
When earth was hid below
The level of the glaring ground,
Choked to its gates with snow;
And when with summer's flowery waves
The lake of verdure rolled,
As if a Sultan's white-robed slaves
Had scattered pearls and gold.

Nay, the soft pinions of the air,
That lift this trembling tone,
Its breath of love may almost bear,
To kiss thy funeral stone;
And now thy smiles have passed away,
For all the joy they gave,
May sweetest dews and warmest ray
Lie on thine early grave!

When damps beneath, and storms above
Have bowed these fragile towers,
Still o'er the graves yon locust-grove
Shall swing its Orient flowers;
And I would ask no mouldering bust,
If e'er this humble line,
Which breathed a sigh o'er others' dust
Might call a tear on mine.



TO AN INSECT.

I LOVE to hear thine earnest voice,
Wherever thou art hid,
Thou testy little dogmatist,
Thou pretty Katydid!

Thou mindest me of gentlefolks,—
Old gentlefolks are they,—
Thou say'st an undisputed thing
In such a solemn way.

Thou art a female, Katydid !
I know it by the trill
That quivers through thy piercing notes,
So petulant and shrill ;
I think there is a knot of you
Beneath the hollow tree,—
A knot of spinster Katydids,—
Do Katydids drink tea ?

Oh tell me where did Katy live,
And what did Katy do ?
And was she very fair and young,
And yet so wicked, too ?
Did Katy love a naughty man,
Or kiss more cheeks than one ?
I warrant Katy did no more
Than many a Kate has done.

Dear me ! I'll tell you all about
My fuss with little Jane,
And Ann, with whom I used to walk
So often down the lane,
And all that tore their locks of black,
Or wet their eyes of blue,—
Pray tell me, sweetest Katydid,
What did poor Katy do ?

Ah no ! the living oak shall crash,
That stood for ages still,

The rock shall rend its mossy base
And thunder down the hill,
Before the little Katydid
Shall add one word, to tell
The mystic story of the maid
Whose name she knows so well.

Peace to the ever-murmuring race !
And when the latest one
Shall fold in death her feeble wings
Beneath the autumn sun,
Then shall she raise her fainting voice,
And lift her drooping lid,
And then the child of future years
Shall hear what Katy did.



THE DILEMMA.

Now by the blessed Paphian queen,
Who heaves the breast of sweet sixteen ;
By every name I cut on bark
Before my morning star grew dark ;
By Hymen's torch, by Cupid's dart,
By all that thrills the beating heart ;
The bright black eye, the melting blue,—
I cannot choose between the two.

I had a vision in my dreams ;—
I saw a row of twenty beams ;
From every beam a rope was hung,
In every rope a lover swung ;

I asked the hue of every eye,
That bade each luckless lover die ;
Ten shadowy lips said, heavenly blue,
And ten accused the darker hue,

I asked a matron which she deemed
With fairest light of beauty beamed ;
She answered, some thought both were fair,—
Give her blue eyes and golden hair.
I might have liked her judgment well,
But, as she spoke, she rung the bell,
And all her girls, nor small nor few,
Came marching in,—their eyes were blue.

I asked a maiden ; back she flung
The locks that round her forehead hung,
And turned her eye, a glorious one,
Bright as a diamond in the sun,
On me, until beneath its rays
I felt as if my hair would blaze ;
She liked all eyes but eyes of green ;
She looked at me ; what could she mean?

Ah ! many lids Love lurks between,
Nor heeds the colouring of his screen ;
And when his random arrows fly,
The victim falls, but knows not why.
Gaze not upon his shield of jet,
The shaft upon the string is set ;
Look not beneath his azure veil,
Though every limb were cased in mail.

Well, both might make a martyr break
The chain that bound him to the stake ;

And both, with but a single ray,
Can melt our very hearts away ;
And both, when balanced, hardly seem
To stir the scales, or rock the beam ;
But that is dearest, all the while,
That wears for us the sweetest smile.

*MY AUNT.*

My aunt ! my dear unmarried aunt !
Long years have o'er her flown ;
Yet still she strains the aching clasp
That binds her virgin zone ;
I know it hurts her,—though she looks
As cheerful as she can ;
Her waist is ampler than her life,
For life is but a span.

My aunt ! my poor deluded aunt !
Her hair is almost gray ;
Why will she train that winter curl
In such a spring-like way ?
How can she lay her glasses down,
And say she reads as well,
When, through a double convex lens,
She just makes out to spell ?

Her father—grandpapa ! forgive
This erring lip its smiles—
Vowed she should make the finest girl
Within a hundred miles ;

He sent her to a stylish school ;
'Twas in her thirteenth June ;
And with her, as the rules required,
"Two towels and a spoon."

They braced my aunt against a board,
To make her straight and tall ;
They laced her up, they starved her down,
To make her light and small ;
They pinched her feet, they singed her hair,
They screwed it up with pins ;—
Oh never mortal suffered more
In penance for her sins.

So, when my precious aunt was done,
My grandsire brought her back
(By daylight, lest some rabid youth
Might follow on the track) ;
"Ah !" said my grandsire, as he shook
Some powder in his pan,
"What could this lovely creature do
Against a desperate man !"

Alas ! nor chariot, nor barouche,
Nor bandit cavalcade,
Tore from the trembling father's arms
His all-accomplished maid.
For her how happy had it been !
And Heaven had spared to me
To see one sad, ungathered rose
On my ancestral tree.

*REFLECTIONS OF A PROUD
PEDESTRIAN.*

I SAW the curl of his waving lash,
And the glance of his knowing eye,
And I knew that he thought he was cutting a dash,
As his steed went thundering by.

And he may ride in the rattling gig,
Or flourish the Stanhope gay,
And dream that he looks exceeding big
To the people that walk in the way ;

But he shall think, when the night is still,
On the stable-boy's gathering numbers,
And the ghost of many a veteran bill
Shall hover around his slumbers ;

The ghastly dun shall worry his sleep,
And constables cluster around him,
And he shall creep from the wood-hole deep
Where their spectre eyes have found him !

Ay ! gather your reins, and crack your thong,
And bid your steed go faster ;
He does not know, as he scrambles along,
That he has a fool for his master ;

And hurry away on your lonely ride,
Nor deign from the mire to save me ;
I will paddle it stoutly at your side
With the tandem that nature gave me !

DAILY TRIALS.

BY A SENSITIVE MAN.

OH, there are times
When all this fret and tumult that we hear
Do seem more stale than to the sexton's ear
His own dull chimes,

Ding dong ! ding dong !
The world is in a simmer like a sea
Over a pent volcano,—woe is me
All the day long !

From crib to shroud !
Nurse o'er our cradles screameth lullaby,
And friends in boots tramp round us as we die,
Snuffing aloud.

At morning's call
The small-voiced pug-dog welcomes in the sun,
And flea-bit mongrels, wakening one by one,
Give answer all.

When evening dim
Draws round us, then the lonely caterwaul,
Tart solo, sour duet, and general squall,—
These are our hymn.

Women, with tongues
Like polar needles, ever on the jar ;
Men, plugless word-spouts, whose deep fountains are
Within their lungs.

Children, with drums
Strapped round them by the fond paternal ass ;
Peripatetics with a blade of grass
Between their thumbs,

Vagrants, whose arts
Have caged some devil in their mad machine,
Which grinding, squeaks, with husky groans between,
Come out by starts.

Cockneys that kill
Thin horses of a Sunday,—men, with clams,
Hoarse as young bisons roaring for their dams
From hill to hill.

Soldiers, with guns,
Making a nuisance of the blessed air,
Child-crying bellmen, children in despair,
Screeching for buns.

Storms, thunders, waves !
Howl, crash, and bellow till ye get your fill ;
Ye sometimes rest ; men never can be still
But in their graves.



EVENING.

BY A TAILOR.

DAY hath put on his jacket, and around
His burning bosom buttoned it with stars.
Here will I lay me on the velvet grass,
That is like padding to earth's meagre ribs,

And hold communion with the things about me.
Ah me ! how lovely is the golden braid
That binds the skirt of night's descending robe !
The thin leaves, quivering on their silken threads,
Do make a music like to rustling satin,
As the light breezes smooth their downy nap.

Ha ! what is this that rises to my touch,
So like a cushion ? Can it be a cabbage ?
It is, it is that deeply injured flower,
Which boys do flout us with ;—but yet I love thee,
Thou giant rose, wrapped in a green surtout.
Doubtless in Eden thou didst blush as bright
As these, thy puny brethren ; and thy breath
Sweetened the fragrance of her spicy air ;
But now thou seemest like a bankrupt beau,
Stripped of his gaudy hues and essences,
And growing portly in his sober garments.

Is that a swan that rides upon the water ?
Oh no, it is that other gentle bird,
Which is the patron of our noble calling.
I well remember, in my early years,
When these young hands first closed upon a goose ;
I have a scar upon my thimble finger,
Which chronicles the hour of young ambition.
My father was a tailor, and his father,
And my sire's grandsire, all of them were tailors ;
They had an ancient goose,—it was an heirloom
From some remoter tailor of our race.
It happened I did see it on a time
When none was near, and I did deal with it,
And it did burn me,—oh, most fearfully !

It is a joy to straighten out one's limbs,
And leap elastic from the level counter,
Leaving the petty grievances of earth,
The breaking thread, the din of clashing shears,
And all the needles that do wound the spirit,
For such a pensive hour of soothing silence.
Kind Nature, shuffling in her loose undress,
Lays bare her shady bosom ;—I can feel
With all around me ;—I can hail the flowers
That sprig earth's mantle,—and yon quiet bird,
That rides the stream, is to me as a brother.
The vulgar know not all the hidden pockets,
Where Nature stows away her loveliness.
But this unnatural posture of the legs
Cramps my extended calves, and I must go
Where I can coil them in their wonted fashion.

THE DORCHESTER GIANT.

THERE was a giant in time of old,
A mighty one was he ;
He had a wife, but she was a scold,
So he kept her shut in his mammoth fold ;
And he had children three.

It happened to be an election day,
And the giants were choosing a king ;
The people were not democrats then,
They did not talk of the rights of men,
And all that sort of thing.

Then the giant took his children three,
And fastened them in the pen ;
The children roared ; quoth the giant, " Be still ! "
And Dorchester Heights and Milton Hill
Rolled back the sound again.

Then he brought them a pudding stuffed with plums,
As big as the State-House dome ;
Quoth he, " There's something for you to eat ;
So stop your mouths with your 'lection treat,
And wait till your dad comes home."

So the giant pulled him a chestnut stout,
And whittled the boughs away ;
The boys and their mother set up a shout,
Said he, " You're in, and you can't get out,
Bellow as loud as you may."

Off he went, and he growled a tune
As he strode the fields along ;
'Tis said a buffalo fainted away,
And fell as cold as a lump of clay,
When he heard the giant's song.

But whether the story's true or not,
It isn't for me to show ;
There's many a thing that's twice as queer
In somebody's lectures that we hear,
And those are true, you know.

.
What are those lone ones doing now,
The wife and the children sad ?
Oh, they are in a terrible rout,
Screaming, and throwing their pudding about,
Acting as they were mad.

They flung it over to Roxbury hills,
They flung it over the plain,
And all over Milton and Dorchester too
Great lumps of pudding the giants threw ;
They tumbled as thick as rain.

.
Giant and mammoth have passed away,
For ages have floated by ;
The suet is hard as a marrow-bone,
And every plum is turned to a stone,
But there the puddings lie.

And if, some pleasant afternoon,
You'll ask me out to ride,
The whole of the story I will tell,
And you shall see where the puddings fell,
And pay for the punch beside.



TO THE PORTRAIT OF "A LADY."

IN THE ATHENÆUM GALLERY.

WELL, Miss, I wonder where you live,
I wonder what's your name,
I wonder how you came to be
In such a stylish frame ;
Perhaps you were a favourite child,
Perhaps an only one ;
Perhaps your friends were not aware
You had your portrait done !
Yet you must be a harmless soul ;
I cannot think that Sin

Would care to throw his loaded dice,
With such a stake to win ;
I cannot think you would provoke
The poet's wicked pen,
Or make young women bite their lips,
Or ruin fine young men.

Pray, did you ever hear, my love,
Of boys that go about,
Who, for a very trifling sum,
Will snip one's picture out ?
I'm not averse to red and white,
But all things have their place.
I think a profile cut in black
Would suit your style of face !

I love sweet features ; I will own
That I should like myself
To see my portrait on a wall,
Or bust upon a shelf ;
But nature sometimes makes one up
Of such sad odds and ends,
It really might be quite as well
Hushed up among one's friends !



THE COMET.

THE Comet ! He is on his way,
And singing as he flies ;
The whizzing planets shrink before
The spectre of the skies ;
Ah ! well may regal orbs burn blue,
And satellites turn pale,

Ten million cubic miles of head,
Ten billion leagues of tail !

On, on by whistling spheres of light
He flashes and he flames ;
He turns not to the left nor right,
He asks them not their names ;
One spurn from his demoniac heel,—
Away, away they fly,
Where darkness might be bottled up
And sold for "Tyrian dye."

And what would happen to the land,
And how would look the sea,
If in the bearded devil's path
Our earth should chance to be?
Full hot and high the sea would boil,
Full red the forests gleam ;
Methought I saw and heard it all
In a dyspeptic dream !

I saw a tutor take his tube
The Comet's course to spy ;
I heard a scream,—the gathered rays
Had stewed the tutor's eye ;
I saw a fort,—the soldiers all
Were armed with goggles green ;
Pop cracked the guns ! whiz flew the balls !
Bang went the magazine !

I saw a poet dip a scroll
Each moment in a tub,
I read upon the warping back,
"The Dream of Beelzebub ;"

He could not see his verses burn,
Although his brain was fried,
And ever and anon he bent
To wet them as they dried.

I saw the scalding pitch roll down
The crackling, sweating pines,
And streams of smoke, like water-spouts,
Burst through the rumbling mines ;
I asked the firemen why they made
Such noise about the town ;
They answered not,—but all the while
The brakes went up and down.

I saw a roasting pullet sit
Upon a baking egg ;
I saw a cripple scorch his hand
Extinguishing his leg ;
I saw nine geese upon the wing
Towards the frozen pole,
And every mother's gosling fell
Crisped to a crackling coal,

I saw the ox that browsed the grass
Writhe in the blistering rays,
The herbage in his shrinking jaws
Was all a fiery blaze ;
I saw huge fishes, boiled to rags,
Bob through the bubbling brine ;
And thoughts of supper crossed my soul ;
I had been rash at mine.

Strange sights! strange sounds! oh fearful dream!
Its memory haunts me still,

The steaming sea, the crimson glare,
That wreathed each wooded hill ;
Stranger ! if through thy reeling brain
Such midnight visions sweep,
Spare, spare, oh, spare thine evening meal,
And sweet shall be thy sleep !



THE MUSIC-GRINDERS.

THERE are three ways in which men take
One's money from his purse,
And very hard it is to tell
Which of the three is worse ;
But all of them are bad enough
To make a body curse,

You're riding out some pleasant day,
And counting up your gains ;
A fellow jumps from out a bush,
And takes your horse's reins,
Another hints some words about
A bullet in your brains.

It's hard to meet such pressing friends
In such a lonely spot ;
It's very hard to lose your cash,
But harder to be shot :
And so you take your wallet out,
Though you would rather not.

Perhaps you're going out to dine,—
Some odious creature begs

You'll hear about the cannon-ball
That carried off his pegs,
And says it is a dreadful thing
For men to lose their legs.

He tells you of his starving wife,
His children to be fed,
Poor little, lovely innocents,
All clamorous for bread,
And so you kindly help to put
A bachelor to bed.

You're sitting on your window-seat,
Beneath a cloudless moon ;
You hear a sound, that seems to wear
The semblance of a tune,
As if a broken fife should strive
To drown a cracked bassoon.

And nearer, nearer still, the tide
Of music seems to come,
There's something like a human voice,
And something like a drum ;
You sit in speechless agony,
Until your ear is numb.

Poor "home, sweet home" should seem to be
A very dismal place ;
Your "auld acquaintance" all at once
Is altered in the face ;
Their discords sting through Burns and Moore,
Like hedgehogs dressed in lace.

You think they are crusaders sent
From some infernal clime,
To pluck the eyes of Sentiment,
And dock the tail of Rhyme,
To crack the voice of Melody,
And break the legs of Time.

But hark ! the air again is still,
The music all is ground,
And silence, like a poultice, comes
To heal the blows of sound ;
It cannot be,—it is,—it is,—
A hat is going round !

No ! pay the dentist when he leaves
A fracture in your jaw,
And pay the owner of the bear
That stunned you with his paw,
And buy the lobster that has had
Your knuckles in his claw ;

But if you are a portly man,
Put on your fiercest frown,
And talk about a constable
To turn them out of town ;
Then close your sentence with an oath,
And shut the window down !

And if you are a slender man,
Not big enough for that,
Or, if you cannot make a speech,
Because you are a flat,
Go very quietly and drop
A button in the hat !

THE TREADMILL SONG.

THE stars are rolling in the sky,
The earth rolls on below,
And we can feel the rattling wheel
Revolving as we go.
Then tread away, my gallant boys,
And make the axle fly ;
Why should not wheels go round about,
Like planets in the sky ?

Wake up, wake up, my duck-legged man,
And stir your solid pegs !
Arouse, arouse, my gawky friend,
And shake your spider legs ;
What though you're awkward at the trade,
There's time enough to learn,—
So lean upon the rail, my lad,
And take another turn.

They've built us up a noble wall,
To keep the vulgar out ;
We've nothing in the world to do
But just to walk about ;
So faster, now, you middle men,
And try to beat the ends,—
It's pleasant work to ramble round
Among one's honest friends.

Here, tread upon the long man's toes,
He shan't be lazy here,—
And punch the little fellow's ribs,
And tweak that lubber's ear,—

He's lost them both,—don't pull his hair,
Because he wears a scratch,
But poke him in the further eye,
That isn't in the patch.

Hark ! fellows, there's the supper bell,
And so our work is done ;
It's pretty sport,—suppose we take
A round or two for fun !
If ever they should turn me out,
When I have better grown,
Now hang me, but I mean to have
A treadmill of my own !



THE SEPTEMBER GALE.

I'm not a chicken ; I have seen
Full many a chill September,
And though I was a youngster then,
That gale I well remember ;
The day before, my kite-string snapped,
And I, my kite pursuing,
The wind whisked off my palm-leaf hat ;—
For me two storms were brewing !

It came as quarrels sometimes do,
When married folks get clashing ;
There was a heavy sigh or two,
Before the fire was flashing,—

A little stir among the clouds,
Before they rent asunder,—
A little rocking of the trees,
And then came on the thunder.

Lord ! how the ponds and rivers boiled !
They seemed like bursting craters !
And oaks lay scattered on the ground
As if they were p'taters ;
And all above was in a howl,
And all below a clatter,—
The earth was like a frying-pan,
Or some such hissing matter.

It chanced to be our washing-day,
And all our things were drying ;
The storm came roaring through the lines,
And set them all a flying ;
I saw the shirts and petticoats
Go riding off like witches ;
I lost, ah ! bitterly I wept,—
I lost my Sunday breeches !

I saw them straddling through the air,
Alas ! too late to win them ;
I saw them chase the clouds, as if
The devil had been in them ;
They were my darlings and my pride,
My boyhood's only riches,—
" Farewell, farewell," I faintly cried,—
" My breeches ! oh my breeches ! "

That night I saw them in my dreams,
How changed from what I knew them !

The dews had steeped their faded threads,
 The winds had whistled through them !
 I saw the wide and ghastly rents
 Where demon claws had torn them ;
 A hole was in their amplest part,
 As if an imp had worn them.

I have had many happy years,
 And tailors kind and clever,
 But those young pantaloons have gone
 For ever and for ever !
 And not till fate has cut the last
 Of all my earthly stitches,
 This aching heart shall cease to mourn
 My loved, my long-lost breeches !



THE HEIGHT OF THE RIDICULOUS.

I WROTE some lines once on a time
 In wondrous merry mood,
 And thought, as usual, men would say
 They were exceeding good.

They were so queer, so very queer,
 I laughed as I would die ;
 Albeit, in the general way,
 A sober man am I.

I called my servant, and he came :
 How kind it was of him
 To mind a slender man like me,
 He of the mighty limb !

"These to the printer," I exclaimed,
And in my humorous way,
I added (as a trifling jest),
"There'll be the devil to pay."

He took the paper, and I watched,
And saw him peep within ;
At the first line he read, his face
Was all upon the grin.

He read the next ; the grin grew broad,
And shot from ear to ear ;
He read the third ; a chuckling noise
I now began to hear.

The fourth ; he broke into a roar ;
The fifth ; his waistband split ;
The sixth ; he burst five buttons off,
And tumbled in a fit.

Ten days and nights, with sleepless eye,
I watched that wretched man,
And since, I never dare to write
As funny as I can.



THE LAST READER.

I SOMETIMES sit beneath a tree
And read my own sweet songs ;
Though naught they may to others be,
Each humble line prolongs
A tone that might have passed away,
But for that scarce remembered lay.

I keep them like a lock or leaf
That some dear girl has given ;
Frail record of an hour, as brief
As sunset clouds in heaven,
But spreading purple twilight still
High over memory's shadowed hill.

They lie upon my pathway bleak,
Those flowers that once ran wild,
As on a father's careworn cheek
The ringlets of his child ;
The golden mingling with the gray,
And stealing half its snows away.

What care I though the dust is spread
Around these yellow leaves,
Or o'er them his sarcastic thread
Oblivion's insect weaves,
Though weeds are tangled on the stream,
It still reflects my morning's beam.

And therefore love I such as smile
On these neglected songs,
Nor deem that flattery's needless wile
My opening bosom wrongs ;
For who would trample at my side,
A few pale buds, my garden's pride?

It may be that my scanty ore
Long years have washed away,
And where were golden sands before,
Is naught but common clay ;
Still something sparkles in the sun
For memory to look back upon.

And when my name no more is heard,
 My lyre no more is known,
 Still let me, like a winter's bird,
 In silence and alone,
 Fold over them the weary wing
 Once flashing through the dews of spring.

Yes, let my fancy fondly wrap
 My youth in its decline,
 And riot in the rosy lap
 Of thoughts that once were mine,
 And give the world my little store
 When the last reader reads no more !



POETRY:

A METRICAL ESSAY, READ BEFORE THE Φ B K
 SOCIETY, HARVARD UNIVERSITY,
 AUGUST 1836.

TO CHARLES WENTWORTH UPHAM, THE FOLLOWING
 METRICAL ESSAY IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

SCENES of my youth ! awake its slumbering fire !
 Ye winds of Memory, sweep the silent lyre !
 Ray of the past, if yet thou canst appear,
 Break through the clouds of Fancy's waning year ;
 Chase from her breast the thin autumnal snow,
 If leaf or blossom still is fresh below !

Long have I wandered ; the returning tide
 Brought back an exile to his cradle's side ;

And as my bark her time-worn flag unrolled,
To greet the land-breeze with its faded fold,
So, in remembrance of my boyhood's time,
I lift these ensigns of neglected rhyme ;
Oh more than blest, that, all my wanderings through,
My anchor falls where first my pennons flew !

The morning light, which rains its quivering
beams
Wide o'er the plains, the summits, and the streams,
In one broad blaze expands its golden glow
On all that answers to its glance below ;
Yet, changed on earth, each far reflected ray
Braids with fresh hues the shining brow of day ;
Now, clothed in blushes by the painted flowers,
Tracks on their cheeks the rosy-fingered hours ;
Now, lost in shades, whose dark entangled leaves
Drip at the noontide from their pendent eaves,
Fades into gloom, or gleams in light again
From every dew-drop on the jewelled plain.

We, like the leaf, the summit, or the wave,
Reflect the light our common nature gave,
But every sunbeam, falling from her throne,
Wears on our hearts some colouring of our own ;
Chilled in the slave, and burning in the free,
Like the sealed cavern by the sparkling sea ;
Lost, like the lightning in the sullen clod,
Or shedding radiance, like the smiles of God,
Pure, pale in Virtue, as the star above,
Or quivering roseate on the leaves of Love ;

Glaring like noontide, where it glows upon
Ambition's sands,—the desert in the sun ;
Or soft suffusing o'er the varied scene
Life's common colouring,—intellectual green.

Thus Heaven, repeating its material plan,
Arched over all the rainbow mind of man ;
But he who, blind to universal laws,
Sees but effects, unconscious of their cause,—
Believes each image in itself is bright,
Not robed in drapery of reflected light,—
Is like the rustic who, amidst his toil,
Has found some crystal in his meagre soil,
And, lost in rapture, thinks for him alone
Earth worked her wonders on the sparkling stone,
Nor dreams that Nature, with as nice a line,
Carved countless angles through the boundless mine.

Thus err the many, who, entranced to find
Unwonted lustre in some clearer mind,
Believe that Genius sets the laws at naught
Which chain the pinions of our wildest thought ;
Untaught to measure, with the eye of art,
The wandering fancy or the wayward heart ;
Who match the little only with the less,
And gaze in rapture at its slight excess,
Proud of a pebble, as the brightest gem
Whose light might crown an emperor's diadem.

And, most of all, the pure ethereal fire,
Which seems to radiate from the poet's lyre
Is to the world a mystery and a charm,
An Ægis wielded on a mortal's arm,

While Reason turns her dazzled eye away,
And bows her sceptre to her subject's sway ;
And thus the poet, clothed with godlike state,
Usurped his Maker's title—to create ;
He, whose thoughts differing not in shape, but dress,
What others feel, more fitly can express,
Sits like the maniac on his fancied throne,
Peeps through the bars and calls the world his own.

There breathes no being but has some pretence
To that fine instinct called poetic sense :
The rudest savage roaming through the wild ;
The simplest rustic bending o'er his child ;
The infant listening to the warbling bird ;
The mother smiling at its half-formed word ;
The boy uncaged, who tracks the fields at large ;
The girl, turned matron to her babe-like charge ;
The freeman, casting with unpurchased hand
The vote that shakes the turrets of the land ;
The slave, who, slumbering on his rusted chain,
Dreams of the palm-trees on his burning plain ;
The hot-cheeked reveller, tossing down the wine,
To join the chorus pealing " Auld lang syne ;"
The gentle maid, whose azure eye grows dim,
While Heaven is listening to her evening hymn ;
The jewelled beauty, when her steps draw near
The circling dance and dazzling chandelier ;
E'en trembling age, when Spring's renewing air
Waves the thin ringlets of his silvered hair ;—
All, all are glowing with the inward flame,
Whose wider halo wreathes the poet's name,
While, unembalmed, the silent dreamer dies,
His memory passing with his smiles and sighs !

If glorious visions, born for all mankind,
The bright auroras of our twilight mind ;
If fancies, varying as the shapes that lie
Stained on the windows of the sunset sky ;
If hopes, that beckon with delusive gleams,
Till the eye dances in the void of dreams ;
If passions, following with the winds that urge
Earth's wildest wanderer to her farthest verge ;—
If these on all some transient hours bestow
Of rapture tingling with its hectic glow,
Then all are poets ; and, if earth had rolled
Her myriad centuries, and her doom were told,
Each moaning billow of her shoreless wave
Would wail its requiem o'er a poet's grave !

If to embody in a breathing word
Tones that the spirit trembled when it heard ;
To fix the image all unveiled and warm,
And carve in language its ethereal form,
So pure, so perfect, that the lines express
No meagre shrinking, no unlaced excess ;
To feel that art, in living truth, has taught
Ourselves, reflected in the sculptured thought ;—
If this alone bestow the right to claim
The deathless garland and the sacred name ;
Then none are poets, save the saints on high,
Whose harps can murmur all that words deny !

But though to none is granted to reveal,
In perfect semblance, all that each may feel,
As withered flowers recall forgotten love,
So, warmed to life, our faded passions move

In every line, where kindling fancy throws
The gleam of pleasures, or the shade of woes.

When, schooled by time, the stately queen of art
Had smoothed the pathways leading to the heart,
Assumed her measured tread, her solemn tone,
And round her courts the clouds of fable thrown,
The wreaths of heaven descended on her shrine,
And wondering earth proclaimed the Muse divine.
Yet, if her votaries had but dared profane
The mystic symbols of her sacred reign,
How had they smiled beneath the veil to find
What slender threads can chain the mighty mind !

Poets, like painters, their machinery claim,
And verse bestows the varnish and the frame ;
Our grating English, whose Teutonic jar
Shakes the racked axle of Art's rattling car,
Fits like mosaic in the lines that gird
Fast in its place each many-angled word ;
From Saxon lips Anacreon's numbers glide,
As once they melted on the Teian tide,
And, fresh transfused, the Iliad thrills again
From Albion's cliffs as o'er Achaia's plain !
The proud heroic, with its pulse-like beat,
Rings like the cymbals clashing as they meet ;
The sweet Spenserian, gathering as it flows,
Sweeps gently onward to its dying close,
Where waves on waves in long succession pour,
Till the ninth billow melts along the shore ;
The lonely spirit of the mournful lay,
Which lives immortal as the verse of Gray,
In sable plumage slowly drifts along,
On eagle pinion, through the air of song ;

The glittering lyric bounds elastic by,
With flashing ringlets and exulting eye,
While every image, in her airy whirl,
Gleams like a diamond on a dancing girl !

Born with mankind, with man's expanded range
And varying fates the poet's numbers change ;
Thus in his history may we hope to find
Some clearer epochs of the poet's mind,
As from the cradle of its birth we trace,
Slow wandering forth, the patriarchal race.

I.

When the green earth, beneath the zephyr's wing,
Wears on her breast the varnished buds of Spring ;
When the loosed current, as its folds uncoil,
Slides in the channels of the mellowed soil ;
When the young hyacinth returns to seek
The air and sunshine with her emerald beak ;
When the light snowdrops, starting from their cells,
Hang each pagoda with its silver bells ;
When the frail willow twines her trailing bough
With pallid leaves that sweep the soil below ;
When the broad elm, sole empress of the plain,
Whose circling shadow speaks a century's reign,
Wreathes in the clouds her regal diadem, —
A forest waving on a single stem ; —
Then mark the poet ; though to him unknown
The quaint-mouthed titles, such as scholars own,
See how his eye in ecstasy pursues
The steps of Nature tracked in radiant hues ;
Nay, in thyself, whate'er may be thy fate,
Pallid with toil, or surfeited with state,

Mark how thy fancies, with the vernal rose,
Awake, all sweetness, from their long repose ;
Then turn to ponder o'er the classic page,
Traced with the idyls of a greener age,
And learn the instinct which arose to warm
Art's earliest essay, and her simplest form.

To themes like these her narrow path confined
The first-born impulse moving in the mind ;
In vales unshaken by the trumpet's sound,
Where peaceful Labour tills his fertile ground,
The silent changes of the rolling years,
Marked on the soil, or dialled on the spheres,
The crested forests and the coloured flowers,
The dewy grottoes and the blushing bowers,
These, and their guardians, who, with liquid names,
Strephons and Chloes, melt in mutual flames,
Woo the young Muses from their mountain shade,
To make Arcadias in the lonely glade.

Nor think they visit only with their smiles
The fabled valleys and the Elysian isles ;
He who is wearied of his village plain
May roam the Edens of the world in vain.
'Tis not the star-crowned cliff, the cataract's flow,
The softer foliage, or the greener glow,
The lake of sapphire, or the spar-hung cave,
The brighter sunset, or the broader wave,
Can warm his heart whom every wind has blown
To every shore, forgetful of his own.

Home of our childhood ! how affection clings
And hovers round thee with her seraph wings !

Dearer thy hills, though clad in autumn brown,
Than fairest summits which the cedars crown !
Sweeter the fragrance of thy summer breeze
Than all Arabia breathes along the seas !
The stranger's gale wafts home the exile's sigh,
For the heart's temple is its own blue sky !

Oh happiest they, whose early love unchanged,
Hopes undissolved, and friendship unestranged,
Tired of their wanderings, still can deign to see
Love, hopes, and friendship, centring all in thee.

And thou, my village ! as again I tread
Amidst thy living, and above thy dead ;
Though some fair playmates guard with chaster fears
Their cheeks, grown holy with the lapse of years ;
Though with the dust some reverent locks may blend,
Where life's last mile-stone marks the journey's end ;
On every bud the changing year recalls,
The brightening glance of morning memory falls,
Still following onward as the months uncloze
The balmy lilac or the bridal rose ;
And still shall follow, till they sink once more
Beneath the snow-drifts of the frozen shore,
As when my bark, long tossing in the gale,
Furled in her port her tempest-rended sail !

What shall I give thee ? Can a simple lay,
Flung on thy bosom like a girl's bouquet,
Do more than deck thee for an idle hour,
Then fall unheeded, fading like the flower ?
Yet, when I trod, with footsteps wild and free,
The crackling leaves beneath yon linden-tree,

Panting from play, or dripping from the stream,
How bright the visions of my boyish dream !
Or, modest Charles, along thy broken edge,
Black with soft ooze and fringed with arrowy sedge.
As once I wandered in the morning sun,
With reeking sandal and superfluous gun ;
How oft, as Fancy whispered in the gale,
Thou wast the Avon of her flattering tale !
Ye hills, whose foliage, fretted on the skies,
Prints shadowy arches on their evening dyes,
How should my song with holiest charm invest
Each dark ravine and forest-lifting crest !
How clothe in beauty each familiar scene,
Till all was classic on my native green !

As the drained fountain, filled with autumn leaves.
The field swept naked of its garnered sheaves ;
So wastes at noon the promise of our dawn,
The springs all choking, and the harvest gone.

Yet hear the lay of one whose natal star
Still seemed the brightest when it shone afar ;
Whose cheek, grown pallid with ungracious toil,
Glow in the welcome of his parent soil ;
And ask no garlands sought beyond the tide,
But take the leaflets gathered at your side.¹

II.

But times were changed ; the torch of terror came,
To light the summits with the beacon's flame ;
The streams ran crimson, the tall mountain pines
Rose a new forest o'er embattled lines ;

¹ For "The Cambridge Churchyard," see p. 16.

The bloodless sickle lent the warrior's steel,
The harvest bowed beneath his chariot wheel ;
Where late the wood-dove sheltered her repose
The raven waited for the conflict's close ;
The cuirassed sentry walked his sleepless round
Where Daphne smiled or Amaryllis frowned ;
Where timid minstrels sung their blushing charms,
Some wild Tyrtæus called aloud, " To arms ! "

When Glory wakes, when fiery spirits leap,
Roused by her accents from their tranquil sleep,
The ray that flashes from the soldier's crest
Lights, as it glances, in the poet's breast ;—
Not in pale dreamers, whose fantastic lay
Toys with smooth trifles like a child at play,
But men, who act the passions they inspire,
Who wave the sabre as they sweep the lyre !

Ye mild enthusiasts, whose pacific frowns
Are lost like dew-drops caught in burning towns,
Pluck as ye will the radiant plumes of fame,
Break Cæsar's bust to make yourselves a name ;
But, if your country bares the avenger's blade
For wrongs unpunished, or for debts unpaid,
When the roused nation bids her armies form,
And screams her eagle through the gathering storm,
When from your ports the bannered frigate rides,
Her black bows scowling to the crested tides,
Your hour has past ; in vain your feeble cry,
As the babe's wailings to the thundering sky !

Scourge of mankind ! with all the dread array
That wraps in wrath thy desolating way,

As the wild tempest wakes the slumbering sea,
Thou only teachest all that man can be,
Alike thy tocsin has the power to charm
The toil-knit sinews of the rustic's arm,
Or swell the pulses in the poet's veins,
And bid the nations tremble at his strains.

The city slept beneath the moonbeam's glance,
Her white walls gleaming through the vines of
France,
And all was hushed, save where the footsteps fell,
On some high tower, of midnight sentinel.
But one still watched ; no self-encircled woes
Chased from his lids the angel of repose ;
He watched, he wept, for thoughts of bitter years
Bowed his dark lashes, wet with burning tears :
His country's sufferings and her children's shame
Streamed o'er his memory like a forest's flame,
Each treasured insult, each remembered wrong,
Rolled through his heart and kindled into song :
His taper faded ; and the morning gales
Swept through the world the war-song of Marseilles !

Now, while around the smiles of Peace expand,
And Plenty's wreaths festoon the laughing land ;
While France ships outward her reluctant ore,
And half our navy basks upon the shore ;
From ruder themes our meek-eyed Muses turn
To crown with roses their enamelled urn.

If e'er again return those awful days
Whose clouds were crimsoned with the beacon's
blaze,

Whose grass was trampled by the soldier's heel,
Whose tides were reddened round the rushing
 keel,

God grant some lyre may wake a nobler strain
To rend the silence of our tented plain !
When Gallia's flag its triple fold displays,
Her marshalled legions peal the Marseillaise ;
When round the German close the war-clouds dim,
Far through their shadows floats his battle-hymn ;
When, crowned with joy, the camps of England
 ring,
A thousand voices shout, " God save the King ! "
When victory follows with our eagle's glance,
Our nation's anthem pipes a country dance !

Some prouder Muse, when comes the hour at
 last,
May shake our hillsides with her bugle blast ;
Not ours the task ; but since the lyric dress
Relieves the statelier with its sprightliness,
Hear an old song, which some, perchance, have
 seen

In stale gazette, or cobwebbed magazine.
There was an hour when patriots dared profane
The mast that Britain strove to bow in vain ;
And one, who listened to the tale of shame,
Whose heart still answered to that sacred name,
Whose eye still followed o'er his country's tides
Thy glorious flag, our brave Old Ironsides !
From yon lone attic, on a summer's morn,
Thus mocked the spoilers with his schoolboy scorn.¹

¹ For " Old Ironsides," see p. 13.

III.

When florid Peace resumed her golden reign,
And arts revived, and valleys bloomed again ;
While War still panted on his broken blade,
Once more the Muse her heavenly wing essayed.
Rude was the song ; some ballad, stern and wild,
Lulled the light slumbers of the soldier's child ;
Or young romancer, with his threatening glance
And fearful fables of his bloodless lance,
Scared the soft fancy of the clinging girls,
Whose snowy fingers smoothed his raven curls.
But when long years the stately form had bent,
And faithless memory her illusions lent,
So vast the outlines of Tradition grew,
That History wondered at the shapes she drew,
And veiled at length their too ambitious hues
Beneath the pinions of the Epic Muse.

Far swept her wing ; for stormier days had brought
With darker passions deeper tides of thought.
The camp's harsh tumult and the conflict's glow,
The thrill of triumph and the gasp of woe,
The tender parting and the glad return,
The festal banquet and the funeral urn,—
And all the drama which at once uprears
Its spectral shadows through the clash of spears,
From camp and field to echoing verse transferred,
Swelled the proud song that listening nations heard.

Why floats the amaranth in eternal bloom
O'er Ilium's turrets and Achilles' tomb?
Why lingers fancy, where the sunbeams smile
On Circe's gardens and Calypso's isle?

Why follows memory to the gate of Troy
Her plumed defender and his trembling boy?
Lo! the blind dreamer, kneeling on the sand,
To trace these records with his doubtful hand;
In fabled tones his own emotion flows,
And other lips repeat his silent woes;
In Hector's infant see the babes that shun
Those deathlike eyes, unconscious of the sun,
Or in his hero hear himself implore,
"Give me to see, and Ajax asks no more!"

Thus live undying through the lapse of time
The solemn legends of the warrior's clime;
Like Egypt's pyramid, or Pæstum's fane,
They stand the heralds of the voiceless plain;
Yet not like them, for Time, by slow degrees,
Saps the gray stone, and wears the embroidered
frieze,
And Isis sleeps beneath her subject Nile,
And crumbled Neptune strews his Dorian pile;
But Art's fair fabric, strengthening as it rears
Its laurelled columns through the mist of years,
As the blue arches of the bending skies
Still gird the torrent, following as it flies,
Spreads, with the surges bearing on mankind,
Its starred pavilion o'er the tides of mind!

In vain the patriot asks some lofty lay
To dress in state our wars of yesterday.
The classic days, those mothers of romance,
That roused a nation for a woman's glance;
The age of mystery with its hoarded power,
That girt the tyrant in his storied tower,

Have past and faded like a dream of youth,
And riper eras asks for history's truth.

On other shores, above their mouldering towns,
In sullen pomp the tall cathedral frowns,
Pride in its aisles, and paupers at the door,
Which feeds the beggars whom it fleeced of yore.
Simple and frail, our lowly temples throw
Their slender shadows on the paths below ;
Scarce steal the winds, that sweep his woodland
 tracks,
The larch's perfume from the settler's axe,
Ere, like a vision of the morning air,
His slight-framed steeple marks the house of prayer ;
Its planks all reeking, and its paint undried,
Its rafters sprouting on the shady side,
It sheds the raindrops from its shingled eaves,
Ere its green brothers once have changed their leaves.

Yet Faith's pure hymn, beneath its shelter rude,
Breathes out as sweetly to the tangled wood,
As where the rays through pictured glories pour
On marble shaft and tessellated floor ;—
Heaven asks no surplice round the heart that feels,
And all is holy where devotion kneels.

Thus on the soil the patriot's knee should bend,
Which holds the dust once living to defend ;
Where'er the hireling shrinks before the free,
Each pass becomes "a new Thermopylæ !"
Where'er the battles of the brave are won,
There every mountain "looks on Marathon !"

Our Fathers live ; they guard in glory still
The grass-grown bastions of the fortified hill ;
Still ring the echoes of the trampled gorge,
With *God and Freedom ! England and Saint George !*
The royal cipher on the captured gun
Mocks the sharp night-dews and the blistering sun ;
The red-cross banner shades its captor's bust,
Its folds still loaded with the conflict's dust ;
The drum, suspended by its tattered marge,
Once rolled and rattled to the Hessian's charge ;
The stars have floated from Britannia's mast,
The redcoat's trumpets blown the rebel's blast.

Point to the summits where the brave have bled,
Where every village claims its glorious dead ;
Say, when their bosoms met the bayonet's shock,—
Their only corselet was the rustic frock ;
Say, when they mustered to the gathering horn,
The titled chieftain curled his lip in scorn,
Yet, when their leader bade his lines advance,
No musket wavered in the lion's glance ;
Say, when they fainted in the forced retreat,
They tracked the snow-drifts with their bleeding feet,
Yet still their banners, tossing in the blast,
Bore *Ever Ready*, faithful to the last,
Through storm and battle, till they waved again
On Yorktown's hills and Saratoga's plain !

Then, if so fierce the insatiate patriot's flame,
Truth looks too pale, and history seems too tame,
Bid him await some new Columbiad's page,
To gild the tablets of an iron age,
And save his tears which yet may fall upon
Some fabled field, some fancied Washington !

IV.

But once again, from their Æolian cave,
The winds of Genius wandered on the wave.
Tired of the scenes the timid pencil drew,
Sick of the notes the sounding clarion blew ;
Sated with heroes who had worn so long
The shadowy plumage of historic song ;
The new-born poet left the beaten course,
To track the passions to their living source.

Then rose the Drama ;—and the world admired
Her varied page with deeper thought inspired ;
Bound to no clime, for Passion's throb is one
In Greenland's twilight or in India's sun ;
Born for no age,—for all the thoughts that roll
In the dark vortex of the stormy soul,
Unchained in song, no freezing years can tame ;
God gave them birth, and man is still the same.

So full on life her magic mirror shone,
Her sister Arts paid tribute to her throne ;
One reared her temple, one her canvas warmed,
And Music thrilled, while Eloquence informed.
The weary rustic left his stinted task
For smiles and tears, the dagger and the mask ;
The sage, turned scholar, half forgot his lore,
To be the woman he despised before ;
O'er sense and thought she threw her golden chain,
And Time, the anarchy, spares her deathless reign.

Thus lives Medea, in our tamer age,
As when her buskin pressed the Grecian stage ;
Not in the cells where frigid learning delves
In Aldine folios mouldering on their shelves ;

But breathing, burning in the glittering throng,
Whose thousand bravoës roll untired along,
Circling and spreading through the gilded halls,
From London's galleries to San Carlo's walls !

Thus shall he live whose more than mortal name
Mocks with its ray the pallid torch of Fame ;
So proudly lifted, that it seems afar
No earthly Pharos, but a heavenly star ;
Who, unconfined to Art's diurnal bound,
Girds her whole zodiac in his flaming round,
And leads the passions, like the orb that guides,
From pole to pole, the palpitating tides !

V.

Though round the Muse the robe of song is thrown,
Think not the poet lives in verse alone.
Long ere the chisel of the sculptor taught
The lifeless stone to mock the living thought ;
Long ere the painter bade the canvas glow
With every line the forms of beauty know ;
Long ere the iris of the Muses threw
On every leaf its own celestial hue ;
In fable's dress the breath of genius poured,
And warmed the shapes that later times adored.

Untaught by Science how to forge the keys,
That loose the gates of Nature's mysteries ;
Unschooled by Faith, who, with her angel tread,
Leads through the labyrinth with a single thread,
His fancy, hovering round her guarded tower,
Rained through its bars like Danaë's golden shower.

He spoke ; the sea-nymph answered from her cave :
He called ; the naiad left her mountain wave :
He dreamed of beauty ; lo, amidst his dream,
Narcissus, mirrored in the breathless stream ;
And night's chaste empress, in her bridal play,
Laughed through the foliage where Endymion lay ;
And ocean dimpled, as the languid swell
Kissed the red lip of Cytherea's shell :
Of power,—Bellona swept the crimson field,
And blue-eyed Pallas shook her Gorgon shield ;
O'er the hushed waves their mightier monarch drove,
And Ida trembled to the tread of Jove !

So every grace that plastic language knows
To nameless poets its perfection owes.
The rough-hewn words to simplest thoughts confined
Were cut and polished in their nicer mind ;
Caught on their edge, imagination's ray
Splits into rainbows, shooting far away ;—
From sense to soul, from soul to sense, it flies,
And through all nature links analogies ;
He who reads right will rarely look upon
A better poet than his lexicon !

There is a race, which cold, ungenial skies
Breed from decay, as fungous growths arise ;
Though dying fast, yet springing fast again,
Which still usurps an unsubstantial reign,
With frames too languid for the charms of sense,
And minds worn down with action too intense ;
Tired of a world whose joys they never knew,
Themselves deceived, yet thinking all untrue ;
Scarce men without, and less than girls within,
Sick of their life before its cares begin ;—

The dull disease, which drains their feeble hearts,
To life's decay some hectic thrills imparts,
And lends a force, which, like the maniac's power,
Pays with blank years the frenzy of an hour.

And this is Genius ! Say, does Heaven degrade
The manly frame, for health, for action made ?
Break down the sinews, rack the brow with pains,
Blanch the bright cheek, and drain the purple veins,
To clothe the mind with more extended sway,
Thus faintly struggling in degenerate clay ?

No ! gentle maid, too ready to admire,
Though false its notes, the pale enthusiast's lyre ;
If this be genius, though its bitter springs
Glowed like the morn beneath Aurora's wings,
Seek not the source whose sullen bosom feeds
But fruitless flowers, and dark, envenomed weeds.

But, if so bright the dear illusion seems,
Thou wouldst be partner of thy poet's dreams,
And hang in rapture on his bloodless charms,
Or die, like Raphael, in his angel arms ;
Go and enjoy thy blessed lot,—to share
In Cowper's gloom, or Chatterton's despair !

Not such were they, whom, wandering o'er the
waves,
I looked to meet, but only found their graves ;
If friendship's smile, the better part of fame,
Should lend my song the only wreath I claim,
Whose voice would greet me with a sweeter tone,
Whose living hand more kindly press my own,

Than theirs,—could Memory, as her silent tread
Prints the pale flowers that blossom o'er the dead,
Those breathless lips, now closed in peace, restore,
Or wake those pulses hushed to beat no more?

Thou calm, chaste scholar ! I can see thee now,
The first young laurels on thy pallid brow,
O'er thy slight figure floating lightly down
In graceful folds the academic gown,
On thy curled lip the classic lines, that taught
How nice the mind that sculptured them with thought,
And triumph glistening in the clear blue eye,
Too bright to live,—but oh, too fair to die !

And thou, dear friend, whom Science still deplores,
And love still mourns, on ocean-severed shores,
Though the bleak forest twice has bowed with snow,
Since thou wast laid its budding leaves below,
Thine image mingles with my closing strain,
As when we wandered by the turbid Seine,
Both blest with hopes, which revelled, bright and free,
On all we longed, or all we dreamed to be ;
To thee the amaranth and the cypress fell,—
And I was spared to breathe this last farewell !

But lived there one in unremembered days,
Or lives there still, who spurns the poet's bays,
Whose fingers, dewy from Castalia's springs,
Rest on the lyre, yet scorn to touch the strings?
Who shakes the senate with the silver tone
The groves of Pindus might have sighed to own?
Have such e'er been ? Remember Canning's name !
Do such still live ? Let " Alaric's Dirge " proclaim !

Immortal Art ! where'er the rounded sky
Bends o'er the cradle where thy children lie,
Their home is earth, their herald every tongue
Whose accents echo to the voice that sung.
One leap of Ocean scatters on the sand
The quarried bulwarks of the loosening land ;
One thrill of earth dissolves a century's toil
Strewed like the leaves that vanish in the soil ;
One hill o'erflows, and cities sink below,
Their marbles splintering in the lava's glow ;
But one sweet tone, scarce whispered to the air,
From shore to shore the blasts of ages bear ;
One humble name, which oft, perchance, has borne
The tyrant's mockery and the courtier's scorn,
Towers o'er the dust of earth's forgotten graves,
As once, emerging through the waste of waves,
The rocky Titan, round whose shattered spear
Coiled the last whirlpool of the drowning sphere !

ADDITIONAL POEMS.

1837-1848.



THE PILGRIM'S VISION.

IN the hour of twilight shadows
The Pilgrim sire looked out ;
He thought of the " bloody Salvages "
That lurked all round about,
Of Wituwamet's pictured knife
And Pecksuot's whooping shout ;
For the baby's limbs were feeble,
Though his father's arms were stout.

His home was a freezing cabin,
Too bare for the hungry rat,
Its roof was thatched with ragged grass,
And bald enough of that ;
The hole that served for casement
Was glazed with an ancient hat ;
And the ice was gently thawing
From the log whereon he sat.

Along the dreary landscape
His eyes went to and fro,
The trees all clad in icicles,
The streams that did not flow ;

A sudden thought flashed o'er him,
A dream of long ago,—
He smote his leathern jerkin,
And murmured, "Even so!"

"Come hither, God-be-Glorified,
And sit upon my knee,
Behold the dream unfolding,
Whereof I spake to thee
By the winter's hearth in Leyden
And on the stormy sea;
True is the dream's beginning,—
So may its ending be!

"I saw in the naked forest
Our scattered remnant cast,
A screen of shivering branches
Between them and the blast;
The snow was falling round them,
The dying fell as fast;
I looked to see them perish,
When lo, the vision passed.

"Again mine eyes were opened;—
The feeble had waxed strong,
The babes had grown to sturdy men,
The remnant was a throng;
By shadowed lake and winding stream,
And all the shores along,
The howling demons quaked to hear
The Christian's godly song.

"They slept,—the village fathers,—
By river, lake, and shore,

When far adown the steep of Time
The vision rose once more ;
I saw along the winter snow
A spectral column pour,
And high above their broken ranks
A tattered flag they bore.

“ Their Leader rode before them,
Of bearing calm and high,
The light of Heaven’s own kindling
Throned in his awful eye ;
These were a Nation’s champions
Her dread appeal to try ;
God for the right ! I faltered,
And lo, the train passed by.

“ Once more ;—the strife is ended,
The solemn issue tried,
The Lord of Hosts, His mighty arm
Has helped our Israel’s side ;
Gray stone and grassy hillock
Tell where our martyrs died,
But peaceful smiles the harvest,
And stainless flows the tide.

“ A crash,—as when some swollen cloud
Cracks o’er the tangled trees !
With side to side, and spar to spar,
Whose smoking decks are these ?
I know Saint George’s blood-red cross,
Thou Mistress of the Seas,—
But what is she, whose streaming bars
Roll out before the breeze ?

“ Ah, well her iron ribs are knit,
Whose thunders strive to quell
The bellowing throats, the blazing lips,
That pealed the Armada’s knell !
The mist was cleared,—a wreath of stars
Rose o’er the crimsoned swell,
And, wavering from its haughty peak,
The cross of England fell !

“ Oh trembling Faith ! though dark the morn,
A heavenly torch is thine ;
While feebler races melt away,
And paler orbs decline,
Still shall the fiery pillar’s ray
Along thy pathway shine,
To light the chosen tribe that sought
This Western Palestine !

“ I see the living tide roll on ;
It crowns with flaming towers
The icy capes of Labrador,
The Spaniard’s ‘ land of flowers ! ’
It streams beyond the splintered ridge
That parts the Northern showers ;
From eastern rock to sunset wave
The Continent is ours ! ”

He ceased,—the grim old soldier-saint,—
Then softly bent to cheer
The pilgrim-child, whose wasting face
Was meekly turned to hear ;
And drew his toil-worn sleeve across,
To brush the manly tear

From cheeks that never changed in woe,
And never blanched in fear.

The weary pilgrim slumbers,
His resting-place unknown ;
His hands were crossed, his lids were closed,
The dust was o'er him strown ;
The drifting soil, the mouldering leaf,
Along the sod were blown ;
His mound has melted into earth,
His memory lives alone.

So let it live unfading,
The memory of the dead,
Long as the pale anemone
Springs where their tears were shed,
Or, raining in the summer's wind
In flakes of burning red,
The wild rose sprinkles with its leaves
The turf where once they bled !

Yea, when the frowning bulwarks
That guard this holy strand
Have sunk beneath the trampling surge
In beds of sparkling sand,
While in the waste of ocean
One hoary rock shall stand,
Be this its latest legend,—
HERE WAS THE PILGRIM'S LAND !

THE STEAMBOAT.

SEE how yon flaming herald treads
The ridged and rolling waves,
As, crashing o'er their crested heads,
She bows her surly slaves !
With foam before and fire behind,
She rends the clinging sea,
That flies before the roaring wind,
Beneath her hissing lee.

The morning spray, like sea-born flowers,
With heaped and glistening bells,
Falls round her fast, in ringing showers,
With every wave that swells ;
And, burning o'er the midnight deep,
In lurid fringes thrown,
The living gems of ocean sweep
Along her flashing zone.

With clashing wheel, and lifting keel,
And smoking torch on high,
When winds are loud, and billows reel,
She thunders foaming by ;
When seas are silent and serene,
With even beam she glides,
The sunshine glimmering through the green
That skirts her gleaming sides.

Now, like a wild nymph, far apart
She veils her shadowy form,
The beating of her restless heart
Still sounding through the storm ;

Now answers, like a courtly dame,
The reddening surges o'er,
With flying scarf of spangled flame,
The Pharos of the shore.

To-night yon pilot shall not sleep,
Who trims his narrowed sail ;
To-night yon frigate scarce shall keep
Her broad breast to the gale ;
And many a foresail, scooped and strained,
Shall break from yard and stay,
Before this smoky wreath has stained
The rising mist of day.

Hark ! hark ! I hear yon whistling shroud,
I see yon quivering mast ;
The black throat of the hunted cloud
Is panting forth the blast !
An hour, and, whirled like winnowing chaff,
The giant surge shall fling
His tresses o'er yon pennon staff,
White as the sea-bird's wing !

Yet rest, ye wanderers of the deep ;
Nor wind nor wave shall tire
Those fleshless arms, whose pulses leap
With floods of living fire ;
Sleep on,—and, when the morning light
Streams o'er the shining bay,
Oh think of those for whom the night
Shall never wake in day !



LEXINGTON.

SLOWLY the mist o'er the meadow was creeping,
Bright on the dewy buds glistened the sun,
When from his couch, while his children were
 sleeping,
 Rose the bold rebel and shouldered his gun,
 Waving her golden veil
 Over the silent dale,
Blithe looked the morning on cottage and spire ;
 Hushed was his parting sigh,
 While from his noble eye
Flashed the last sparkle of liberty's fire.

On the smooth green where the fresh leaf is springing
Calmly the first-born of glory have met ;
Hark ! the death-volley around them is ringing !
Look ! with their life-blood the young grass is
 wet !
 Faint is the feeble breath,
 Murmuring low in death,
" Tell to our sons how their fathers have died ; "
 Nerveless the iron hand,
 Raised for its native land,
Lies by the weapon that gleams at its side.

Over the hillsides the wild knell is tolling,
From their far hamlets the yeomanry come ;
As through the storm-clouds the thunder-burst
 rolling,
Circles the beat of the mustering drum.

Fast on the soldier's path
Darken the waves of wrath,
Long have they gathered and loud shall they fall ;
Red glares the musket's flash,
Sharp rings the rifle's crash,
Blazing and clanging from thicket and wall.

Gaily the plume of the horseman was dancing,
Never to shadow his cold brow again ;
Proudly at morning the war-steed was prancing,
Reeking and panting he droops on the rein ;
Pale is the lip of scorn,
Voiceless the trumpet horn,
Torn is the silken-fringed red cross on high ;
Many a belted breast
Low on the turf shall rest,
Ere the dark hunters the herd have passed by.

Snow-girdled crags where the hoarse wind is raving,
Rocks where the weary floods murmur and wail,
Wilds where the fern by the furrow is waving,
Reeled with the echoes that rode on the gale ;
Far as the tempest thrills
Over the darkened hills,
Far as the sunshine streams over the plain,
Roused by the tyrant band,
Woke all the mighty land,
Girded for battle, from mountain to main.

Green be the graves where her martyrs are lying !
Shroudless and tombless they sunk to their rest,—
While o'er their ashes the starry fold flying
Wraps the proud eagle they roused from his nest.

Borne on her Northern pine,
Long o'er the foaming brine
Spread her broad banner to storm and to sun ;
Heaven keep her ever free,
Wide as o'er land and sea
Floats the fair emblem her heroes have won !



ON LENDING A PUNCH-BOWL.

THIS ancient silver bowl of mine, it tells of good old times,
Of joyous days, and jolly nights, and merry Christmas chimes ;
They were a free and jovial race, but honest, brave, and true,
That dipped their ladle in the punch when this old bowl was new.

A Spanish galleon brought the bar ; so runs the ancient tale ;
'Twas hammered by an Antwerp smith, whose arm was like a flail ;
And now and then between the strokes, for fear his strength should fail,
He wiped his brow, and quaffed a cup of good old Flemish ale.

'Twas purchased by an English squire to please his loving dame,
Who saw the cherubs, and conceived a longing for the same ;

And oft as on the ancient stock another twig was
found,

'Twas filled with caudle spiced and hot, and handed
smoking round.

But, changing hands, it reached at length a Puritan
divine,

Who used to follow Timothy, and take a little wine,
But hated punch and prelacy; and so it was,
perhaps,

He went to Leyden, where he found conventicles and
schnaps.

And then, of course, you know what's next,—it left
the Dutchman's shore

With those that in the Mayflower came,—a hundred
souls and more,—

Along with all the furniture, to fill their new
abodes,—

To judge by what is still on hand, at least a hundred
loads.

'Twas on a dreary winter's eve, the night was closing
dim,

When brave Miles Standish took the bowl, and filled
it to the brim;

The little Captain stood and stirred the posset with
his sword,

And all his sturdy men-at-arms were ranged about
the board.

He poured the fiery Hollands in,—the man that never
feared,—

He took a long and solemn draught, and wiped his
yellow beard;

And one by one the musketeers—the men that fought
and prayed—
All drank as 'twere their mother's milk, and not a
man afraid.

That night, affrighted from his nest, the screaming
eagle flew,
He heard the Pequot's ringing whoop, the soldier's
wild halloo ;
And there the sachem learned the rule he taught to
kith and kin,
“ Run from the white man when you find he smells
of Hollands gin ! ”

A hundred years, and fifty more, had spread their
leaves and snows,
A thousand rubs had flattened down each little
cherub's nose,
When once again the bowl was filled, but not in mirth
or joy,
'Twas mingled by a mother's hand to cheer her
parting boy.

“ Drink, John,” she said, “ 'twill do you good,—poor
child, you'll never bear
This working in the dismal trench, out in the mid-
night air ;
And if—God bless me !—you were hurt, 'twould keep
away the chill.”
So John *did* drink,—and well he wrought that night
at Bunker's Hill !

I tell you, there was generous warmth in good old
English cheer ;
I tell you, 'twas a pleasant thought to bring its
symbol here ;
'Tis but the fool that loves excess ; hast thou a
drunken soul ?
Thy bane is in thy shallow skull, not in my silver
bowl !

I love the memory of the past,—its pressed yet frag-
rant flowers,—
The moss that clothes its broken walls,—the ivy on
its towers ;
Nay, this poor bauble it bequeathed,—my eyes grow
moist and dim,
To think of all the vanished joys that danced around
its brim.

Then fill a fair and honest cup, and bear it straight
to me ;
The goblet hallows all it holds, whate'er the liquid
be ;
And may the cherubs on its face protect me from the
sin,
That dooms one to those dreadful words,—“ My dear,
where *have* you been ? ”

A SONG

FOR THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF
HARVARD COLLEGE, 1836.

WHEN the Puritans came over,
Our hills and swamps to clear,
The woods were full of catamounts,
And Indians red as deer,
With tomahawks and scalping-knives,
That make folks' heads look queer ;—
Oh the ship from England used to bring
A hundred wigs a year !

The crows came cawing through the air
To pluck the pilgrims' corn,
The bears came snuffing round the door
Whene'er a babe was born,
The rattlesnakes were bigger round
Than the butt of the old ram's horn
The deacon blew at meeting time
On every " Sabbath " morn,

But soon they knocked the wigwams down,
And pine-tree trunk and limb
Began to sprout among the leaves
In shape of steeples slim ;
And out the little wharves were stretched
Along the ocean's rim,
And up the little school-house shot
To keep the boys in trim.

And, when at length the College rose,
The sachem cocked his eye
At every tutor's meagre ribs
Whose coat-tails whistled by :
But when the Greek and Hebrew words
Came tumbling from their jaws,
The copper-coloured children all
Ran screaming to the squaws.

And who was on the Catalogue
When College was begun ?
Two nephews of the President,
And *the* Professor's son ;
(They turned a little Indian by,
As brown as any bun ;)
Lord ! how the seniors knocked about
The freshman class of one !

They had not then the dainty things
That commons now afford,
But *succotash* and *homony*
Were smoking on the board ;
They did not rattle round in gigs,
Or dash in long-tail blues,
But always on Commencement days
The tutors blacked their shoes.

God bless the ancient Puritans !
Their lot was hard enough ;
But honest hearts make iron arms,
And tender maids are tough ;
So love and faith have formed and fed
Our true-born Yankee stuff,
And keep the kernel in the shell
The British found so rough !

THE ISLAND HUNTING-SONG.

No more the summer floweret charms,
The leaves will soon be sere,
And Autumn folds his jewelled arms
Around the dying year ;
So, ere the waning seasons claim
Our leafless groves awhile,
With golden wine and glowing flame
We'll crown our lonely isle.

Once more the merry voices sound
Within the antlered hall,
And long and loud the baying hounds
Return the hunter's call ;
And through the woods, and o'er the hill,
And far along the bay,
The driver's horn is sounding shrill,—
Up, sportsmen, and away !

No bars of steel, or walls of stone,
Our little empire bound,
But, circling with his azure zone,
The sea runs foaming round ;
The whitening wave, the purpled skies,
The blue and lifted shore,
Braid with their dim and blending dyes
Our wide horizon o'er.

And who will leave the grave debate
That shakes the smoky town,
To rule amid our island-state,
And wear our oak-leaf crown ?

And who will be awhile content
To hunt our woodland game,
And leave the vulgar pack that scent
The reeking track of fame?

Ah, who that shares in toils like these
Will sigh not to prolong
Our days beneath the broad-leaved trees,
Our nights of mirth and song?
Then leave the dust of noisy streets,
Ye outlaws of the wood,
And follow through his green retreats
Your noble Robin Hood.

DEPARTED DAYS.

YES, dear departed, cherished days,
Could Memory's hand restore
Your morning light, your evening rays
From Time's gray urn once more,—
Then might this restless heart be still,
This straining eye might close,
And Hope her fainting pinions fold,
While the fair phantoms rose.

But, like a child in ocean's arms,
We strive against the stream,
Each moment farther from the shore
Where life's young fountains gleam ;—
Each moment fainter wave the fields,
And wider rolls the sea ;
The mist grows dark,—the sun goes down,—
Day breaks,—and where are we?

THE ONLY DAUGHTER.

ILLUSTRATION OF A PICTURE.

THEY bid me strike the idle strings,
As if my summer days
Had shaken sunbeams from their wings
To warm my autumn lays ;
They bring to me their painted urn,
As if it were not time
To lift my gauntlet and to spurn
The lists of boyish rhyme ;
And, were it not that I have still
Some weakness in my heart
That clings around my stronger will
And pleads for gentler art,
Perchance I had not turned away
The thoughts grown tame with toil,
To cheat this lone and pallid ray,
That wastes the midnight oil.

Alas ! with every year I feel
Some roses leave my brow ;
Too young for wisdom's tardy seal,
Too old for garlands now ;
Yet, while the dewy breath of spring
Steals o'er the tingling air,
And spreads and fans each emerald wing
The forest soon shall wear,
How bright the opening year would seem
Had I one look like thine,
To meet me when the morning beam
Unseals these lids of mine !

Too long I bear this lonely lot,
That bids my heart run wild
To press the lips that love me not,
To clasp the stranger's child.

How oft beyond the dashing seas,
Amidst those royal bowers,
Where danced the lilacs in the breeze,
And swung the chestnut-flowers,
I wandered like a wearied slave
Whose morning task is done,
To watch the little hands that gave
Their whiteness to the sun ;
To revel in the bright young eyes,
Whose lustre sparkled through
The sable fringe of Southern skies
Or gleamed in Saxon blue !
How oft I heard another's name
Called in some truant's tone ;
Sweet accents ! which I longed to claim,
To learn and lisp my own !

Too soon the gentle hands, that pressed
The ringlets of the child,
Are folded on the faithful breast
Where first he breathed and smiled ;
Too oft the clinging arms untwine,
The melting lips forget,
And darkness veils the bridal shrine
Where wreaths and torches met ;
If Heaven but leaves a single thread
Of Hope's dissolving chain,
Even when her parting plumes are spread,
It bids them fold again ;

The cradle rocks beside the tomb ;
The cheek now changed and chill
Smiles on us in the morning bloom
Of one that loves us still,

Sweet image ! I have done thee wrong
To claim this destined lay ;
The leaf that asked an idle song
Must bear my tears away.
Yet, in thy memory shouldst thou keep
This else forgotten strain,
'Till years have taught thine eyes to weep,
And flattery's voice is vain ;
Oh then, thou fledgling of the nest,
Like the long-wandering dove,
'Thy weary heart may faint for rest,
As mine, on changeless love ;
And while these sculptured lines retrace
The hours now dancing by,
This vision of thy girlish grace
May cost thee, too, a sigh.



SONG

WRITTEN FOR THE DINNER GIVEN TO CHARLES
DICKENS BY THE YOUNG MEN OF BOSTON,
FEB. 1, 1842.

THE stars their early vigils keep,
The silent hours are near,
When drooping eyes forget to weep,—
Yet still we linger here ;

And what—the passing churl may ask—
Can claim such wondrous power,
That Toil forgets his wonted task,
And Love his promised hour?

The Irish harp no longer thrills,
Or breathes a fainter tone;
The clarion blast from Scotland's hills,
Alas! no more is blown;
And Passion's burning lip bewails
Her Harold's wasted fire,
Still lingering o'er the dust that veils
The Lord of England's lyre.

But grieve not o'er its broken strings,
Nor think its soul hath died,
While yet the lark at heaven's gate sings,
As once o'er Avon's side;
While gentle summer sheds her bloom,
And dewy blossoms wave,
Alike o'er Juliet's storied tomb
And Nelly's nameless grave.

Thou glorious island of the sea!
Though wide the wasting flood
That parts our distant land from thee,
We claim thy generous blood;
Nor o'er thy far horizon springs
One hallowed star of fame,
But kindles, like an angel's wings,
Our western skies in flame!

L I N E S

RECITED AT THE BERKSHIRE FESTIVAL.

COME back to your mother, ye children, for shame,
Who have wandered like truants, for riches or fame !
With a smile on her face, and a sprig in her cap,
She calls you to feast from her bountiful lap.

Come out from your alleys, your courts, and your
lanes !
And breathe like young eagles, the air of our plains ;
Take a whiff from our fields, and your excellent
wives
Will declare it's all nonsense insuring your lives.

Come you of the law, who can talk, if you please,
Till the man in the moon will allow it's a cheese,
And leave " the old lady, that never tells lies,"
To sleep with her handkerchief over her eyes.

Ye healers of men, for a moment decline
Your feats in the rhubarb and ipecac line ;
While you shut up your turnpike, your neighbours
can go
The old roundabout road, to the regions below.

You clerk, on whose ears are a couple of pens,
And whose head is an ant-hill of units and tens ;
'Though Plato denies you, we welcome you still
As a featherless biped, in spite of your quill.

Poor drudge of the city ! how happy he feels,
With the burs on his legs, and the grass at his heels !

No *dodger* behind, his bandannas to share,
No constable grumbling, "You mustn't walk there!"

In yonder green meadow, to memory dear,
He slaps a mosquito and brushes a tear;
The dew-drops hang round him on blossoms and
shoots,
He breathes but one sigh for his youth and his boots.

There stands the old school-house, hard by the old
church:
That tree at its side had the flavour of birch;
Oh sweet were the days of his juvenile tricks,
Though the prairie of youth had so many "big licks."

By the side of yon river he weeps and he slumps,
The boots fill with water, as if they were pumps,
Till, sated with rapture, he steals to his bed,
With a glow in his heart and a cold in his head.

'Tis past,—he is dreaming,—I see him again;
The ledger returns as by legerdemain;
His neckcloth is damp with an easterly flaw,
And he holds in his fingers an omnibus straw.

He dreams the chill gust is a blossomy gale,
That the straw is a rose from his dear native vale;
And murmurs, unconscious of space and of time,
"A I. Extra super. Ah, isn't it PRIME!"

Oh what are the prizes we perish to win
To the first little "shiner" we caught with a pin!
No soil upon earth is so dear to our eyes
As the soil we first stirred in terrestrial pies!

Then come from all parties, and parts, to our feast ;
Though not at the "Astor," we'll give you at least
A bite at an apple, a seat on the grass,
And the best of old—water—at nothing a glass.



NUX POSTCÆNATICA.

I WAS sitting with my microscope, upon my parlour
rug,
With a very heavy quarto and a very lively bug ;
The true bug had been organised with only two
antennæ,
But the humbug in the copperplate would have them
twice as many.

And I thought, like Dr. Faustus, of the emptiness of
art,
How we take a fragment for the whole, and call the
whole a part,
When I heard a heavy footstep that was loud enough
for two,
And a man of forty entered, exclaiming,—“How
d’ye do?”

He was not a ghost, my visitor, but solid flesh and
bone ;
He wore a Palo Alto hat, his weight was twenty
stone ;
(It’s odd how hats expand their brims as riper years
invade,
As if when life had reached its noon, it wanted them
for shade !)

I lost my focus,—dropped my book,—the bug, who
 - was a flea,
 At once exploded, and commenced experiments on
 me.

They have a certain heartiness that frequently
 appals,—

Those mediæval gentlemen in semilunar smalls!

“My boy,” he said—{colloquial ways,—the vast,
 broad-hatted man),—

“Come dine with us on Thursday next,—you must,
 you know you can ;

We’re going to have a roaring time, with lots of fun
 and noise,

Distinguished guests, et cetera, the JUDGE, and all
 the boys.”

Not so,—I said,—my temporal bones are showing
 pretty clear,

It’s time to stop,—just look and see that hair above
 this ear ;

My golden days are more than spent,—and, what is
 very strange,

If these are real silver hairs, I’m getting lots of
 change.

Besides—my prospects—don’t you know that people
 won’t employ

A man that wrongs his manliness by laughing like a
 boy ?

And suspect the azure blossom that unfolds upon a
 shoot,

As if wisdom’s old potato could not flourish at its
 root ?

It's a very fine reflection, when you're etching out a
smile
On a copperplate of faces that would stretch at least
a mile,
That, what with sneers from enemies, and cheapen-
ing shrugs of friends,
It will cost you all the earnings that a month of
labour lends !

It's a vastly pleasing prospect, when you're screwing
out a laugh,
That your very next year's income is diminished by a
half,
And a little boy trips barefoot that Pegasus may go,
And the baby's milk is watered that your Helicon
may flow !

No ;—the joke has been a good one,—but I'm get-
ting fond of quiet,
And I don't like deviations from my customary diet ;
So I think I will not go with you to hear the toasts
and speeches,
But stick to old Montgomery Place, and have some
pig and peaches.

The fat man answered :—Shut your mouth, and hear
the genuine creed ;
The true essentials of a feast are only fun and feed ;
The force that wheels the planets round delights in
spinning tops,
And that young earthquake t'other day was great at
shaking props.

I tell you what, philosopher, if all the longest heads
That ever knocked their sinciputs in stretching on
their beds
Were round one great mahogany, I'd beat those fine
old folks
With twenty dishes, twenty fools, and twenty clever
jokes !

Why, if Columbus should be there, the company
would beg
He'd show that little trick of his of balancing the egg !
Milton to Stilton would give in, and Solomon to Salmon,
And Roger Bacon be a bore, and Francis Bacon
gammon !

And as for all the "patronage" of all the clowns
and boors
That squint their little narrow eyes at any freak of
yours,
Do leave them to your prosier friends,—such fellows
ought to die
When rhubarb is so very scarce and ipecac so high !

And so I come,—like Lochinvar, to tread a single
measure,
To purchase with a loaf of bread a sugar-plum of
pleasure,
To enter for the cup of glass that's run for after
dinner,
Which yields a single sparkling draught, then breaks
and cuts the winner.

Ah, that's the way delusion comes,—a glass of old
Madeira,
A pair of visual diaphragms revolved by Jane or
Sarah,
And down go vows and promises without the
slightest question,
If eating words won't compromise the organs of
digestion !

And yet, among my native shades, beside my nurs-
ing mother,
Where every stranger seems a friend, and every
friend a brother,
I feel the old convivial glow (unaided) o'er me
stealing,—
The warm, champagny, old-particular, brandy-
punchy feeling.

We're all alike ;—Vesuvius flings the scorixæ from his
fountain,
But down they come in volleying rain back to the
burning mountain ;
We leave, like those volcanic stones, our precious
Alma Mater,
But will keep dropping in again to see the dear old
crater,



VERSES FOR AFTER-DINNER.

Φ B K SOCIETY, 1844.

I WAS thinking last night, as I sat in the cars,
With the charmingest prospect of cinders and stars,
Next Thursday is—bless me!—how hard it will be,
If that cannibal president calls upon me!

There is nothing on earth that he will not devour,
From a tutor in seed to a freshman in flower;
No sage is too gray, and no youth is too green,
And you can't be too plump, though you're never
too lean.

While others enlarge on the boiled and the roast,
He serves a raw clergyman up with a toast,
Or catches some doctor, quite tender and young,
And basely insists on a bit of his tongue.

Poor victim, prepared for his classical spit,
With a stuffing of praise, and a basting of wit,
You may twitch at your collar, and wrinkle your brow,
But you're up on your legs, and you're in for it now.

Oh think of your friends,—they are waiting to hear
Those jokes that are thought so remarkably queer;
And all the Jack Horners of metrical buns
Are prying and fingering to pick out the puns.

Those thoughts which, like chickens, will always
thrive best
When reared by the heat of the natural nest,

Will perish if hatched from their embryo dream
In the mist and the glow of convivial steam.

Oh pardon me, then, if I meekly retire,
With a very small flash of ethereal fire ;
No rubbing will kindle your Lucifer match,
If the *fizz* does not follow the primitive scratch.

Dear friends, who are listening so sweetly the while,
With your lips double-reefed in a snug little smile,—
I leave you two fables, both drawn from the deep,—
The shells you can drop, but the pearls you may keep.

.

The fish called the FLOUNDER, perhaps you may
know,

Has one side for use and another for show ;
One side for the public, a delicate brown,
And one that is white, which he always keeps down.

A very young flounder, the flattest of flats
(And they're none of them thicker than opera hats),
Was speaking more freely than charity taught
Of a friend and relation that just had been caught.

“ My ! what an exposure ! just see what a sight !
I blush for my race,—he is showing his white !
Such spinning and wriggling,—why, what does he
wish ?

How painfully small to respectable fish ! ”

Then said an old SCULPIN,—“ My freedom excuse,
But you're playing the cobbler with holes in your
shoes ;

You're brown side is up,—but just wait till you're tried,
And you'll find that all flounders are white on one side."

.

There's a slice near the PICKEREL's pectoral fins,
Where the *thorax* leaves off and the *venter* begins ;
Which his brother, survivor of fish-hooks and lines,
Though fond of his family, never declines.

He loves his relations ; he feels they'll be missed ;
But that one little titbit he cannot resist ;
So your bait may be swallowed, no matter how fast,
For you catch your next fish with a piece of the last.

And thus, O survivor, whose merciless fate
Is to take the next hook with the president's bait,
You are lost while you snatch from the end of his line
The morsel he rent from this bosom of mine !



A MODEST REQUEST

COMPLIED WITH AFTER THE DINNER AT
PRESIDENT EVERETT'S INAUGURATION.

SCENE,—a back parlour in a certain square,
Or court, or lane,—in short, no matter where ;
Time,—early morning, dear to simple souls
Who love its sunshine, and its fresh-baked rolls ;
Persons,—take pity on this tell-tale blush,
That, like the Æthiop, whispers, " Hush, oh hush ! "

Delightful scene ! where smiling comfort broods,
 Nor business frets, nor anxious care intrudes ;
O si sic omnia ! were it ever so !
 But what is stable in this world below ?
Medio e fonte,—Virtue has her faults,—
 The clearest fountains taste of Epsom salts ;
 We snatch the cup and lift to drain it dry,—
 Its central dimple holds a drowning fly !
 Strong is the pine by Maine's ambrosial streams,
 But stronger augers pierce its thickest beams ;
 Nor iron gate, no spiked and panelled door,
 Can keep out death, the postman, or the bore ;—
 Oh for a world where peace and silence reign,
 And blunted dulness terebrates in vain !
 —The door-bell jingles,—enter Richard Fox,
 And takes this letter from his leathern box.

“ Dear Sir,

In writing on a former day,
 One little matter I forgot to say ;
 I now inform you in a single line,
 On Thursday next our purpose is to *dine*.
 The act of feeding, as you understand,
 Is but a fraction of the work in hand ;
 Its nobler half is that ethereal meat
 The papers call ‘ the intellectual treat ; ’
 Songs, speeches, toasts, around the festive board
 Drowned in the juice the College pumps afford :
 For only water flanks our knives and forks,
 So, sink or float, we swim without the corks.
 Yours is the art, by native genius taught,
 To clothe in eloquence the naked thought ;

Yours is the skill its music to prolong
 Through the sweet effluence of mellifluous song ;
 Yours the quaint trick to cram the pithy line
 That cracks so crisply over bubbling wine ;
 And since success your various gifts attends,
 We—that is, I and all your numerous friends—
 Expect from you—your single self a host—
 A speech, a song, excuse me, *and* a toast ;
 Nay, not to haggle on so small a claim,
 A few of each, or several of the same.

(Signed), Yours, *most truly*, ——”

No ! my sight must fail,—
 If that ain't Judas on the largest scale !

Well, this *is* modest ;—nothing else than that ?
 My coat ? my boots ? my pantaloons ? my hat ?
 My stick ? my gloves ? as well as all my wits,
 Learning and linen,—everything that fits !

Jack, said my lady, is it grog you'll try,
 Or punch, or toddy, if perhaps you're dry ?
 Ah, said the sailor, though I can't refuse,
 You know, my lady, 'tain't for me to choose ;—
 I'll take the grog to finish off my lunch,
 And drink the toddy while you mix the punch.

THE SPEECH. (The speaker, rising to be seen,
 Looks very red, because so very green.)
 I rise—I rise—with unaffected fear,
 (Louder !—speak louder !—who the deuce can hear ?)
 I rise—I said—with undisguised dismay—
 —Such are my feelings as I rise, I say !

Quite unprepared to face this learned throng,
Already gorged with eloquence and song ;
Around my view are ranged on either hand
The genius, wisdom, virtue, of the land ;
“ Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed
Close at my elbow stir their lemonade ;
Would you like Homer learn to write and speak,
That bench is groaning with its weight of Greek ;
Behold the naturalist who in his teens
Found six new species in a dish of greens ;
And lo, the master in a statelier walk,
Whose annual ciphering takes a ton of chalk ;
And there the linguist, who by common roots
Thro’ all their nurseries tracks old Noah’s shoots,—
How Shem’s proud children reared the Assyrian
 piles,
While Ham’s were scattered through the Sandwich
 Isles—

—Fired at the thought of all the present shows,
My kindling fancy down the future flows :
I see the glory of the coming days
O’er Time’s horizon shoot its streaming rays ;
Near and more near the radiant morning draws
In living lustre (rapturous applause) ;
From east to west the blazing heralds run,
Loosed from the chariot of the ascending sun,
Through the long vista of uncounted years
In cloudless splendour (three tremendous cheers).
My eye prophetic, as the depths unfold,
Sees a new advent of the age of gold ;
While o’er the scene new generations press
New heroes rise the coming time to bless,—

Not such as Homer's, who, we read in Pope,
Dined without forks and never heard of soap,—
Not such as May to Marlborough Chapel brings,
Lean, hungry, savage, anti-everythings,
Copies of Luther in the pasteboard style,—
But genuine articles,—the true Carlyle ;
While far on high the blazing orb shall shed
Its central light on Harvard's holy head,
And Learning's ensigns ever float unfurled
Here in the focus of the new-born world !

The speaker stops, and, trampling down the pause,
Roars through the hall the thunder of applause,
One stormy gust of long-suspended Ahs !
One whirlwind chaos of insane hurrahs !

THE SONG. But this demands a briefer line,—
A shorter muse, and not the old long Nine ;—
Long metre answers for a common song,
Though common metre does not answer long.

She came beneath the forest dome
To seek its peaceful shade,
An exile from her ancient home,—
A poor forsaken maid ;
No banner, flaunting high above,
No blazoned cross, she bore ;
One holy book of light and love
Was all her worldly store.

The dark brown shadows passed away,
And wider spread the green,

And where the savage used to stray,
The rising mart was seen ;
So, when the laden winds had brought
Their showers of golden rain,
Her lap some precious gleanings caught,
Like Ruth's amid the grain.

But wrath soon gathered uncontrolled
Among the baser churls,
To see her ankles red with gold,
Her forehead white with pearls ;
" Who gave to thee the glittering bands
That lace thine azure veins ?
Who bade thee lift those snow-white hands
We bound in gilded chains ? "

" These are the gems my children gave,"
The stately dame replied ;
" The wise, the gentle, and the brave,
I nurtured at my side ;
If envy still your bosom stings,
Take back their rims of gold ;
My sons will melt their wedding-rings,
And give a hundred-fold ! "

THE TOAST. Oh tell me, ye who thoughtless ask
Exhausted nature for a threefold task,
In wit or pathos if one share remains,
A safe investment for an ounce of brains?
Hard is the job to launch the desperate pun,
A pun-job dangerous as the Indian one.
Turned by the current of some stronger wit
Back from the object that you mean to hit,

Like the strange missile which the Australian throws,
Your verbal *boomerang* slaps you on the nose.
One vague inflection spoils the whole with doubt,
One trivial letter ruins all, left out ;
A knot can choke a felon into clay,
A not will save him, spelt without the *k* ;
The smallest word has some unguarded spot,
And danger lurks in *i* without a dot.

Thus great Achilles, who had shown his zeal
In healing wounds, died of a wounded heel ;
Unhappy chief, who, when in childhood doused,
Had saved his bacon, had his feet been soused !
Accursed heel that killed a hero stout !
Oh, had your mother known that you were out,
Death had not entered at the trifling part
That still defies the small chirurgeon's art
With corns and bunions,—not the glorious John,
Who wrote the book we all have pondered on,—
But other bunions, bound in fleecy hose,
To “ Pilgrim's Progress ” unrelenting foes !

A health, unmingled with the reveller's wine,
To him whose title is indeed divine ;
Truth's sleepless watchman on her midnight tower,
Whose lamp burns brightest when the tempests lower.
Oh who can tell with what a leaden flight
Drag the long watches of his weary night,
While at his feet the hoarse and blinding gale
Strews the torn wreck and bursts the fragile sail,

When stars have faded, when the wave is dark,
When rocks and sands embrace the foundering bark,
And still he pleads with unavailing cry,
Behold the light, O wanderer, look or die !

A health, fair Themis ! Would the enchanted vine
Wreathed its green tendrils round this cup of thine ;
If Learning's radiance fill thy modern court,
Its glorious sunshine streams through Blackstone's
port !
Lawyers are thirsty, and their clients too,
Witness at least, if memory serve me true,
Those old tribunals, famed for dusty suits,
Where men sought justice ere they brushed their
boots ;—
And what can match, to solve a learned doubt,
The warmth within that comes from " cold without ? "

Health to the art whose glory is to give
The crowning boon that makes it life to live.
Ask not her home ; the rock where nature flings
Her arctic lichen, last of living things,
The gardens, fragrant with the orient's balm,
From the low jasmine to the star-like palm,
Hail her as mistress o'er the distant waves,
And yield their tribute to her wandering slaves.
Wherever, moistening the ungrateful soil,
The tear of suffering tracks the path of toil,
There, in the anguish of his fevered hours,
Her gracious finger points to healing flowers ;
Where the lost felon steals away to die,
Her soft hand waves before his closing eye ;

Where hunted misery finds his darkest lair,
The midnight taper shows her kneeling there !
VIRTUE,—the guide that men and nations own ;
And LAW,—the bulwark that protects her throne ;
And HEALTH,—to all its happiest charm that lends ;
These and their servants, man's untiring friends ;
Pour the bright lymph that Heaven itself lets fall,—
In one fair bumper let us toast them all !



THE STETHOSCOPE SONG.

A PROFESSIONAL BALLAD.

THERE was a young man in Boston town,
He bought him a STETHOSCOPE nice and new,
All mounted and finished and polished down,
With an ivory cap and a stopper too.

It happened a spider within did crawl,
And spun him a web of ample size,
Wherein there chanced one day to fall
A couple of very imprudent flies.

The first was a bottle-fly, big and blue,
The second was smaller, and thin and long :
So there was a concert between the two,
Like an octave flute and a tavern gong.

Now being from Paris but recently,
This fine young man would show his skill ;
And so they gave him, his hand to try,
A hospital patient extremely ill.

Some said that his *liver* was short of *bile*,
And some that his *heart* was over size,
While some kept arguing all the while
He was crammed with *tubercles* up to his eyes.

This fine young man then up stepped he,
And all the doctors made a pause ;
Said he,—The man must die, you see,
By the fifty-seventh of Louis's laws.

But since the case is a desperate one,
To explore his chest it may be well ;
For if he should die and it were not done,
You know the *autopsy* would not tell.

Then out his stethoscope he took,
And on it placed his curious ear ;
Mon Dieu ! said he, with a knowing look,
Why here is a sound that's mighty queer !

The *bourdonnement* is very clear,—
Amphoric buzzing, as I'm alive !
Five doctors took their turn to hear ;
Amphoric buzzing, said all the five.

There's *empyema* beyond a doubt ;
We'll plunge a *trocar* in his side.—
The diagnosis was made out,
They tapped the patient ; so he died.

Now such as hate new-fashioned toys
Began to look extremely glum ;
They said that *rattles* were made for boys,
And vowed that his *buzzing* was all a hum.

There was an old lady had long been sick,
And what was the matter none did know :
Her pulse was slow, though her tongue was quick ;
To her this knowing youth must go.

So there the nice old lady sat,
With phials and boxes all in a row ;
She asked the young doctor what he was at,
To thump her and tumble her ruffles so.

Now, when the stethoscope came out,
The flies began to buzz and whiz ;—
Oh ho ! the matter is clear, no doubt ;
An *aneurism* there plainly is.

The *bruit de râpe* and the *bruit de scie*
And the *bruit de diable* are all combined ;
How happy Bouillaud would be,
If he a case like this could find !

Now, when the neighbouring doctors found
A case so rare had been descried,
They every day her ribs did pound
In squads of twenty ; so she died.

Then six young damsels, slight and frail,
Received this kind young doctor's cares ;
They all were getting slim and pale,
And short of breath on mounting stairs.

They all made rhymes with " sighs " and " skies,"
And loathed their puddings and buttered rolls,
And dieted, much to their friends' surprise,
On pickles and pencils and chalk and coals.

So fast their little hearts did bound,
The frightened insects buzzed the more ;
So over all their chests he found
The *râle sifflant*, and the *râle sonore*.

He shook his head ; there's grave disease—
I greatly fear you all must die ;
A slight *post-mortem*, if you please,
Surviving friends would gratify.

The six young damsels wept aloud,
Which so prevailed on six young men,
That each his honest love avowed,
Whereat they all got well again.

This poor young man was all aghast ;
The price of stethoscopes came down ;
And so he was reduced at last
To practise in a country town.

The doctors being very sore,
A stethoscope they did devise,
That had a rammer to clear the bore,
With a knob at the end to kill the flies.

Now use your ears, all you that can,
But don't forget to mind your eyes,
Or you may be cheated, like this young man,
By a couple of silly, abnormal flies.



EXTRACTS FROM A MEDICAL POEM.

THE STABILITY OF SCIENCE.

THE feeble sea-birds, blinded in the storms,
 On some tall lighthouse dash their little forms,
 And the rude granite scatters for their pains
 Those small deposits that were meant for brains.
 Yet the proud fabric in the morning's sun
 Stands all unconscious of the mischief done ;
 Still the red beacon pours its evening rays
 For the lost pilot with as full a blaze,
 Nay, shines, all radiance, o'er the scattered fleet
 Of gulls and boobies brainless at its feet.

I tell their fate, though courtesy disclaims
 To call our kind by such ungentle names ;
 Yet, if your rashness bid you vainly dare,
 Think of their doom, ye simple, and beware !

See where aloft its hoary forehead rears
 The towering pride of twice a thousand years !
 Far, far below the vast incumbent pile
 Sleeps the gray rock from art's Ægean isle ;
 Its massive courses, circling as they rise,
 Swell from the waves to mingle with the skies ;
 There every quarry lends its marble spoil,
 And clustering ages blend their common toil ;
 The Greek, the Roman, reared its ancient walls,
 The silent Arab arched its mystic halls ;
 In that fair niche, by countless billows laved,
 Trace the deep lines that Sydenham engraved ;
 On yon broad front that breasts the changing swell,
 Mark where the ponderous sledge of Hunter fell ;

By that square buttress look where Louis stands,
The stone yet warm from his uplifted hands ;
And say, O Science, shall thy life-blood freeze,
When fluttering folly flaps on walls like these?

A PORTRAIT.

Thoughtful in youth, but not austere in age ;
Calm, but not cold, and cheerful though a sage ;
Too true to flatter, and too kind to sneer,
And only just when seemingly severe ;
So gently blending courtesy and art,
That wisdom's lips seemed borrowing friendship's
heart.

Taught by the sorrows that his age had known
In others' trials to forget his own,
As hour by hour his lengthened day declined,
A sweeter radiance lingered o'er his mind.
Cold were the lips that spoke his early praise,
And hushed the voices of his morning days,
Yet the same accents dwelt on every tongue,
And love renewing kept him ever young.

A SENTIMENT.

Ο βλος βραχύς,—life is but a song ;
Η τέχνη μακρή,—art is wondrous long ;
Yet to the wise her paths are ever fair,
And Patience smiles, though Genius may despair.
Give us but knowledge, though by slow degrees,
And blend our toil with moments bright as these ;
Let Friendship's accents cheer our doubtful way,
And Love's pure planet lend its guiding ray,—
Our tardy Art shall wear an angel's wings,
And life shall lengthen with the joy it brings !

THE PARTING WORD.

I MUST leave thee, lady sweet !
Months shall waste before we meet ;
Winds are fair, and sails are spread,
Anchors leave their ocean bed ;
Ere this shining day grow dark,
Skies shall gird my shoreless bark ;
Through thy tears, O lady mine,
Read thy lover's parting line.

When the first sad sun shall set,
Thou shalt tear thy locks of jet ;
When the morning star shall rise,
Thou shalt wake with weeping eyes ;
When the second sun goes down,
Thou more tranquil shalt be grown,
Taught too well that wild despair
Dims thine eyes, and spoils thy hair.

All the first unquiet week
Thou shalt wear a smileless cheek ;
In the first month's second half
Thou shalt once attempt to laugh ;
Then in Pickwick thou shalt dip,
Slightly puckering round the lip,
Till at last, in sorrow's spite,
Samuel makes thee laugh outright.

While the first seven mornings last,
Round thy chamber bolted fast,
Many a youth shall fume and pout,
" Hang the girl, she's always out !"

While the second week goes round,
Vainly shall they ring and pound ;
When the third week shall begin,
"Martha, let the creature in."

Now once more the flattering throng
Round thee flock with smile and song,
But thy lips, unweaned as yet,
Lisp, "Oh, how can I forget !"
Men and devils both contrive
Traps for catching girls alive ;
Eve was duped, and Helen kissed,—
How, oh how can you resist ?

First be careful of your fan,
Trust it not to youth or man ;
Love has filled a pirate's sail
Often with its perfumed gale.
Mind your kerchief most of all,
Fingers touch when kerchiefs fall ;
Shorter ell than mercers clip
Is the space from hand to lip.

Trust not such as talk in tropes,
Full of pistols, daggers, ropes ;
All the hemp that Russia bears
Scarce would answer lovers' prayers ;
Never thread was spun so fine,
Never spider stretched the line,
Would not hold the lovers true
That would really swing for you.

Fiercely some shall storm and swear,
Beating breasts in black despair ;

Others murmur with a sigh,
You must melt, or they will die ;
Painted words on empty lies,
Grubs with wings like butterflies ;
Let them die, and welcome, too ;
Pray what better could they do ?

Fare thee well, if years efface
From thy heart love's burning trace,
Keep, oh keep that hallowed seat
From the tread of vulgar feet ;
If the blue lips of the sea
Wait with icy kiss for me,
Let not thine forget the vow,
Sealed how often, Love, as now.



A SONG OF OTHER DAYS.

As o'er the glacier's frozen sheet
Breathes soft the Alpine rose,
So, through life's desert springing sweet,
The flower of friendship grows ;
And as, where'er the roses grow,
Some rain or dew descends,
'Tis nature's law that wine should flow
To wet the lips of friends.
Then once again, before we part,
My empty glass shall ring ;
And he that has the warmest heart
Shall loudest laugh and sing.

They say we were not born to eat ;
But gray-haired sages think
It means,—Be moderate in your meat,
And partly live to drink ;
For baser tribes the rivers flow
That know not wine or song ;
Man wants but little drink below,
But wants that little strong.
Then once again, &c.

If one bright drop is like the gem
That decks a monarch's crown,
One goblet holds a diadem
Of rubies melted down !
A fig for Cæsar's blazing brow,
But, like the Egyptian queen,
Bid each dissolving jewel glow
My thirsty lips between.
Then once again, &c.

The Grecian's mound, the Roman's urn,
Are silent when we call,
Yet still the purple grapes return
To cluster on the wall ;
It was a bright Immortal's head
They circled with the vine,
And o'er their best and bravest dead
They poured the dark-red wine.
Then once again, &c.

Methinks o'er every sparkling glass
Young Eros waves his wings,
And echoes o'er its dimples pass
From dead Anacreon's strings ;

And, tossing round its beaded brim
Their locks of floating gold,
With bacchant dance and choral hymn
Return the nymphs of old.
Then once again, &c.

A welcome then to joy and mirth,
From hearts as fresh as ours,
To scatter o'er the dust of earth
Their sweetly mingled flowers ;
'Tis Wisdom's self the cup that fills
In spite of Folly's frown,
And Nature, from her vine-clad hills,
That rains her life-blood down !
Then once again, before we part,
My empty glass shall ring ;
And he that has the warmest heart
Shall loudest laugh and sing.



SONG

FOR A TEMPERANCE DINNER TO WHICH LADIES
WERE INVITED (NEW YORK MERCANTILE
LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, NOV. 1842).

A HEALTH to dear woman ! She bids us untwine,
From the cup it encircles, the fast-clinging vine ;
But her cheek in its crystal with pleasure will glow,
And mirror its bloom in the bright wave below.

A health to sweet woman ! The days are no more
When she watched for her lord till the revel was o'er,
And smoothed the white pillow, and blushed when
 he came,

As she pressed her cold lips on his forehead of flame.

Alas for the loved one ! too spotless and fair
The joys of his banquet to chasten and share ;
Her eye lost its light that his goblet might shine,
And the rose of her cheek was dissolved in his wine.

Joy smiles in the fountain, health flows in the rills,
As their ribbons of silver unwind from the hills ;
They breathe not the mist of the bacchanal's dream,
But the lilies of innocence float on their stream.

Then a health and a welcome to woman once more !
She brings us a passport that laughs at our door ;
It is written on crimson,—its letters are pearls,—
It is countersigned *Nature*.—So, room for the Girls !



A SENTIMENT.

THE pledge of Friendship ! it is still divine,
Though watery floods have quenched its burning
 wine ;

Whatever vase the sacred drops may hold,
The gourd, the shell, the cup of beaten gold,
Around its brim the hand of Nature throws
A garland sweeter than the banquet's rose.
Bright are the blushes of the vine-wreathed bowl,
Warm with the sunshine of Anacreon's soul,

But dearer memories gild the tasteless wave
That fainting Sidney perished as he gave.
'Tis the heart's current lends the cup its glow,
Whate'er the fountain whence the draught may
flow,—

The diamond dew-drops sparkling through the sand,
Scooped by the Arab in his sunburnt hand,
Or the dark streamlet oozing from the snow,
Where creep and crouch the shuddering Esqui-
maux ;—

Ay, in the stream that, ere again we meet,
Shall burst the pavement, glistening at our feet,
And, stealing silent from its leafy hills,
Thread all our alleys with its thousand rills,—
In each pale draught if generous feeling blend,
And o'er the goblet friend shall smile on friend,
Even cold Cochituate every heart shall warm,
And genial Nature still defy reform !



A RHYMED LESSON.¹

(URANIA.)

YES, dear Enchantress,—wandering far and long,
In realms unperfumed by the breath of song,
Where flowers ill-flavoured shed their sweets around,
And bitterest roots invade the ungenial ground,
Whose gems are crystals from the Epsom mine,
Whose vineyards flow with antimonial wine,

¹ This poem was delivered before the Boston Mercantile Library Association, October 14, 1846.

Whose gates admit no mirthful feature in,
Save one gaunt mocker, the Sardonic grin,
Whose pangs are real, not the woes of rhyme
That blue-eyed misses warble out of time ;—
Truant, not recreant to thy sacred claim,
Older by reckoning, but in heart the same,
Freed for a moment from the chains of toil,
I tread once more thy consecrated soil ;
Here at thy feet my old allegiance own,
Thy subject still, and loyal to thy throne !

My dazzled glance explores the crowded hall ;
Alas, how vain to hope the smiles of all ;
I know my audience. All the gay and young
Love the light antics of a playful tongue ;
And these, remembering some expansive line
My lips let loose among the nuts and wine,
Are all impatience till the opening pun
Proclaims the witty shamfight is begun.
Two fifths at least, if not the total half,
Have come infuriate for an earthquake laugh ;
I know full well what alderman has tied
His red bandanna tight about his side ;
I see the mother, who, aware that boys
Perform their laughter with superfluous noise,
Beside her kerchief, brought an extra one
To stop the explosions of her bursting son ;
I know a tailor, once a friend of mine,
Expects great doings in the button line ;—
For mirth's concussions rip the outward case,
And plant the stitches in a tenderer place.
I know my audience ;—these shall have their due ;
A smile awaits them ere my song is through !

I know myself. Not servile for applause,
My Muse permits no deprecating clause ;
Modest or vain, she will not be denied
One bold confession due to honest pride ;
And well she knows the drooping veil of song
Shall save her boldness from the caviller's wrong.
Her sweeter voice the Heavenly Maid imparts
To tell the secrets of our aching hearts ;
For this, a suppliant, captive, prostrate, bound,
She kneels imploring at the feet of sound ;
For this, convulsed in thought's maternal pains,
She loads her arms with rhyme's resounding chains ;
Faint though the music of her fetters be,
It lends one charm ;—her lips are ever free !

Think not I come, in manhood's fiery noon,
To steal his laurels from the stage buffoon ;
His sword of lath the harlequin may wield ;
Behold the star upon my lifted shield !
Though the just critic pass my humble name,
And sweeter lips have drained the cup of fame,
While my gay stanza pleased the banquet's lords,
The soul within was tuned to deeper chords !
Say, shall my arms, in other conflicts taught
To swing aloft the ponderous mace of thought,
Lift, in obedience to a school-girl's law,
Mirth's tinsel wand or laughter's tickling straw ?
Say, shall I wound with satire's rankling spear
The pure, warm hearts that bid me welcome here ?
No ! while I wander through the land of dreams,
To strive with great and play with trifling themes,
Let some kind meaning fill the varied line ;
You have your judgment ; will you trust to mine !

Between two breaths what crowded mysteries lie,—
The first short gasp, the last and long-drawn sigh !
Like phantoms painted on the magic slide,
Forth from the darkness of the past we glide,
As living shadows for a moment seen
In airy pageant on the eternal screen,
Traced by a ray from one unchanging flame,
Then seek the dust and stillness whence we came.

But whence and why, our trembling souls inquire,
Caught these dim visions their awakening fire?
Oh who forgets when first the piercing thought
Through childhood's musings found its way unsought?
I AM ;—I LIVE. The mystery and the fear
When the dread question, WHAT HAS BROUGHT ME
HERE ?

Burst through life's twilight, as before the sun
Roll the deep thunders of the morning gun !

Are angel faces, silent and serene,
Bent on the conflicts of this little scene,
Whose dream-like efforts, whose unreal strife,
Are but the preludes to a larger life?

Or does life's summer see the end of all,
These leaves of being mouldering as they fall,
As the old poet vaguely used to deem,
As WESLEY questioned in his youthful dream?
Oh could such mockery reach our souls indeed,
Give back the Pharaohs' or the Athenian's creed ;
Better than this a Heaven of man's device,—
The Indian's sports, the Moslem's paradise !

Or is our being's only end and aim
To add new glories to our Maker's name,

As the poor insect, shrivelling in the blaze,
Lends a faint sparkle to its streaming rays?
Does earth send upwards to the Eternal's ear
The mingled discords of her jarring sphere
To swell His anthem, while creation rings
With notes of anguish from its shattered strings?
Is it for this the immortal Artist means
These conscious, throbbing, agonised machines?

Dark is the soul whose sullen creed can bind
In chains like these the all-embracing Mind;
No! two-faced bigot, thou dost ill reprove
The sensual, selfish, yet benignant Jove,
And praise a tyrant throned in lonely pride,
Who loves himself, and cares for naught beside;
Who gave thee, summoned from primeval night,
A thousand laws, and not a single right,—
A heart to feel, and quivering nerves to thrill,
The sense of wrong, the death-defying will;
Who girt thy senses with this goodly frame,
Its earthly glories and its orbs of flame,
Not for thyself, unworthy of a thought,
Poor helpless victim of a life unsought,
But all for Him, unchanging and supreme,
The heartless centre of thy frozen scheme!

Trust not the teacher with his lying scroll,
Who tears the charter of thy shuddering soul;
The God of love, who gave the breath that warms
All living dust in all its varied forms,
Asks not the tribute of a world like this
To fill the measure of His perfect bliss.

Though winged with life through all its radiant
shores,
Creation flowed with unexhausted stores,
Cherub and seraph had not yet enjoyed ;
For this He called thee from the quickening void :
Nor this alone ; a larger gift was thine,
A mightier purpose swelled His vast design ;
Thought,—conscience,—will,—to make them all
thine own,
He rent a pillar from the eternal throne !

Made in His image, thou must nobly dare
The thorny crown of sovereignty to share.
With eye uplifted, it is thine to view,
From thine own centre, Heaven's o'er-arching blue ;
So round thy heart a beaming circle lies
No fiend can blot, no hypocrite disguise ;
From all its orbs one cheering voice is heard,
Full to thine ear it bears the Father's word,
Now, as in Eden where His first-born trod :
" Seek thine own welfare, true to man and God ! "

Think not too meanly of thy low estate ;
Thou hast a choice ; to choose is to create !
Remember whose the sacred lips that tell,
Angels approve thee when thy choice is well ;
Remember, One, a judge of righteous men,
Swore to spare Sodom if she held but ten !
Use well the freedom which thy Master gave,
(Think'st thou that Heaven can tolerate a slave ?)
And He who made thee to be just and true
Will bless thee, love thee,—ay, respect thee too !

Nature has placed thee on a changeful tide,
To breast its waves, but not without a guide ;

Yet, as the needle will forget its aim,
Jarred by the fury of the electric flame,
As the true current it will falsely feel,
Warped from its axis by a freight of steel ;
So will thy CONSCIENCE lose its balanced truth
If passion's lightning fall upon thy youth ;
So the pure effluence quit its sacred hold,
Girt round too deeply with magnetic gold.

Go to yon tower, where busy science plies
Her vast antennæ, feeling through the skies ;
That little vernier on whose slender lines
The midnight taper trembles as it shines,
A silent index, tracks the planets' march
In all their wanderings through the ethereal arch,
Tells through the mist where dazzled Mercury burns,
And marks the spot where Uranus returns.

So, till by wrong or negligence effaced,
The living index which thy Maker traced
Repeats the line each starry Virtue draws
Through the wide circuit of creation's laws ;
Still tracks unchanged the everlasting ray
Where the dark shadows of temptation stray ;
But, once defaced, forgets the orbs of light,
And leaves thee wandering o'er the expanse of night.

"What is thy creed?" a hundred lips inquire ;
"Thou seekest God beneath what Christian spire?"
Nor ask they idly, for uncounted lies
Float upward on the smoke of sacrifice ;
When man's first incense rose above the plain,
Of earth's two altars one was built by Cain !

Uncursed by doubt, our earliest creed we take ;
We love the precepts for the teacher's sake ;

The simple lessons which the nursery taught
Fell soft and stainless on the buds of thought,
And the full blossom owes its fairest hue
To those sweet tear-drops of affection's dew.

Too oft the light that led our earlier hours
Fades with the perfume of our cradle flowers ;
The clear, cold question chills to frozen doubt ;
Tired of beliefs, we dread to live without ;
Oh then, if Reason waver at thy side,
Let humbler Memory be thy gentle guide ;
Go to thy birthplace, and, if faith was there,
Repeat thy father's creed, thy mother's prayer !

Faith loves to lean on Time's destroying arm,
And age, like distance, lends a double charm ;
In dim cathedrals, dark with vaulted gloom,
What holy awe invests the saintly tomb !
There pride will bow, and anxious care expand,
And creeping avarice come with open hand ;
The gay can weep, the impious can adore,
From morn's first glimmerings on the chancel floor,
Till dying sunset sheds his crimson stains
Through the faint halos of the irised panes.

Yet there are graves, whose rudely-shapen sod
Bears the fresh footprints where the sexton trod ;
Graves where the verdure has not dared to shoot,
Where the chance wild-flower has not fixed its root,
Whose slumbering tenants, dead without a name,
The eternal record shall at length proclaim
Pure as the holiest in the long array
Of hooded, mitred, or tiaraed clay !

Come, seek the air ; some pictures we may gain
Whose passing shadows shall not be in vain ;

Not from the scenes that crowd the stranger's soil,
Not from our own amidst the stir of toil,
But when the Sabbath brings its kind release,
And Care lies slumbering on the lap of Peace.

The air is hushed ; the street is holy ground ;
Hark ! the sweet bells renew their welcome sound ;
As one by one awakes each silent tongue,
It tells the turret whence its voice is flung.

The Chapel, last of sublunary things
That stirs our echoes with the name of Kings,
Whose bell, just glistening from the font and forge,
Rolled its proud requiem for the second George,
Solemn and swelling, as of old it rang,
Flings to the wind its deep, sonorous clang ;—
The simpler pile, that, mindful of the hour
When Howe's artillery shook its half-built tower,
Wears on its bosom, as a bride might do,
The iron breastpin which the " Rebels " threw,
Wakes the sharp echoes with the quivering thrill
Of keen vibrations, tremulous and shrill ;—
Aloft, suspended in the morning's fire,
Crash the vast cymbals from the Southern spire ;—
The Giant, standing by the elm-clad green,
His white lance lifted o'er the silent scene,
Whirling in air his brazen goblet round,
Swings from its brim the swollen floods of sound ;—
While, sad with memories of the olden time,
Throbs from his tower the Northern Minstrel's chime,
Faint, single tones, that spell their ancient song,
But tears still follow as they breathe along.

Child of the soil, whom fortune sends to range
Where man and nature, faith and customs change,
Borne in thy memory, each familiar tone
Mourns on the winds that sigh in every zone.
When Ceylon sweeps thee with her perfumed breeze
Through the warm billows of the Indian seas ;
When—ship and shadow blended both in one—
Flames o'er thy mast the equatorial sun,
From sparkling midnight to refulgent noon
Thy canvas swelling with the still monsoon ;
When through thy shrouds the wild tornado sings,
And thy poor seabird folds her tattered wings,—
Oft will delusion o'er thy senses steal,
And airy echoes ring the Sabbath peal !
Then, dim with grateful tears, in long array
Rise the fair town, the island-studded bay,
Home, with its smiling board, its cheering fire,
The half-choked welcome of the expecting sire,
The mother's kiss, and, still if aught remain,
Our whispering hearts shall aid the silent strain.—

Ah, let the dreamer o'er the taffrail lean
To muse unheeded, and to weep unseen ;
Fear not the tropic's dew, the evening's chills,
His heart lies warm among his triple hills !

Turned from her path by this deceitful gleam,
My wayward fancy half forgets her theme ;
See through the streets that slumbered in repose
The living current of devotion flows ;
Its varied forms in one harmonious band,
Age leading childhood by its dimpled hand,
Want, in the robe whose faded edges fall,
To tell of rags beneath the tartan shawl,

And wealth, in silks that, fluttering to appear,
Lift the deep borders of the proud cashmere.

See, but glance briefly, sorrow-worn and pale,
Those sunken cheeks beneath the widow's veil ;
Alone she wanders where with *him* she trod,
No arm to stay her, but she leans on God.

While other doublets deviate here and there,
What secret handcuff binds that pretty pair ?
Compactest couple ! pressing side to side,—
Ah, the white bonnet that reveals the bride !

By the white neckcloth, with its straitened tie,
The sober hat, the Sabbath-speaking eye,
Severe and smileless, he that runs may read
The stern disciple of Geneva's creed ;
Decent and slow, behold his solemn march ;
Silent he enters through yon crowded arch.

A livelier bearing of the outward man,
The light-hued gloves, the undevout rattan,
Now smartly raised or half-profanelly twirled,—
A bright, fresh twinkle from the week-day world,—
Tell their plain story ;—yes, thine eyes behold
A cheerful Christian from the liberal fold.

Down the chill street that curves in gloomiest shade
What marks betray yon solitary maid ?
The cheek's red rose, that speaks of balmier air ;
The Celtic hue that shades her braided hair ;
The gilded missal in her kerchief tied ;
Poor Nora, exile from Killarney's side !

Sister in toil, though blanched by colder skies,
That left their azure in her downcast eyes,
See pallid Margaret, Labour's patient child,
Scarce weaned from home, the nursling of the wild,

Where white Katahdin o'er the horizon shines,
And broad Penobscot dashes through the pines.
Still, as she hastes, her careful fingers hold
The unfailing hymn-book in its cambric fold.
Six days at drudgery's heavy wheel she stands,
The seventh sweet morning folds her weary hands ;
Yes, child of suffering, thou may'st well be sure
He who ordained the Sabbath loves the poor !

This weekly picture faithful Memory draws,
Nor claims the noisy tribute of applause ;
Faint is the glow such barren hopes can lend,
And frail the line that asks no loftier end.

Trust me, kind listener, I will yet beguile
Thy saddened features of the promised smile ;
This magic mantle thou must well divide,
It has its sable and its ermine side ;
Yet, ere the lining of the robe appears,
Take thou in silence what I give in tears.

Dear listening soul, this transitory scene
Of murmuring stillness, busily serene,—
This solemn pause, the breathing-space of man,
The halt of toil's exhausted caravan,—
Comes sweet with music to thy wearied ear ;
Rise with its anthems to a holier sphere !

Deal meekly, gently, with the hopes that guide
The lowliest brother straying from thy side ;
If right, they bid thee tremble for thine own,
If wrong, the verdict is for God alone !

What though the champions of thy faith esteem
The sprinkled fountain or baptismal stream ;

Shall jealous passions in unseemly strife
Cross their dark weapons o'er the waves of life?

Let my free soul, expanding as it can,
Leave to this scene the thoughtful Puritan ;
But Calvin's dogma shall my lips deride ?
In that stern faith my angel Mary died ;—
Or ask if mercy's milder creed can save,
Sweet sister, risen from thy new-made grave?

True, the harsh founders of thy church reviled
That ancient faith, the trust of Erin's child ;
Must thou be raking in the crumbled past
For racks and faggots in her teeth to cast ?
See from the ashes of Helvetia's pile
The whitened skull of old Servetus smile !
Round her young heart thy " Romish Upas " threw
Its firm, deep fibres, strengthening as she grew ;
Thy sneering voice may call them " Popish tricks,"—
Her Latin prayers, her dangling crucifix,—
But *De Profundis* blessed her father's grave ;
That " idol " cross her dying mother gave !

What if some angel looks with equal eyes
On her and thee, the simple and the wise,
Writes each dark fault against thy brighter creed,
And drops a tear with every foolish bead !

Grieve, as thou must, o'er history's reeking page ;
Blush for the wrongs that stain thy happier age ;
Strive with the wanderer from the better path,
Bearing thy message meekly, not in wrath ;
Weep for the frail that err, the weak that fall,
Have thine own faith,—but hope and pray for all !

Faith ; Conscience ; Love. A meaner task remains,
And humbler thoughts must creep in lowlier strains ;
Shalt thou be honest ? Ask the worldly schools,
And all will tell thee knaves are busier fools ;
Prudent ? Industrious ? Let not modern pens
Instruct " Poor Richard's " fellow-citizens.

Be firm ! One constant element in luck
Is genuine, solid, old Teutonic pluck ;
See yon tall shaft ; it felt the earthquake's thrill,
Clung to its base, and greets the sunrise still.

Stick to your aim ; the mongrel's hold will slip,
But only crowbars loose the bulldog's grip ;
Small as he looks, the jaw that never yields
Drags down the bellowing monarch of the fields !

Yet in opinions look not always back ;
Your wake is nothing, mind the coming track ;
Leave what you've done for what you have to do ;
Don't be " consistent," but be simply true.

Don't catch the fidgets ; you have found your place
Just in the focus of a nervous race,
Fretful to change, and rabid to discuss,
Full of excitements, always in a fuss ;—
Think of the patriarchs ; then compare as men
These lean-cheeked maniacs of the tongue and pen !
Run, if you like, but try to keep your breath ;
Work like a man, but don't be worked to death ;
And with new notions,—let me change the rule,—
Don't strike the iron till it's slightly cool.

Choose well your *set* ; our feeble nature seeks
The aid of clubs, the countenance of cliques ;

And with this object settle first of all
 Your weight of mettle and your size of ball.
 Track not the steps of such as hold you cheap,
 Too mean to prize, though good enough to keep ;
 The "real, genuine, no-mistake Tom Thumbs"
 Are little people fed on great men's crumbs.

Yet keep no followers of that hateful brood
 That basely mingles with its wholesome food
 The tumid reptile, which, the poet said,
 Doth wear a precious jewel in his head.

If the wild filly, "Progress," thou wouldst ride,
 Have young companions ever at thy side ;
 But, wouldst thou stride the stanch old mare,
 "Success,"

Go with thine elders, though they please thee less.

Shun such as lounge through afternoons and eves,
 And on thy dial write, "Beware of thieves !"
 Felon of minutes, never taught to feel
 The worth of treasures which thy fingers steal,
 Pick my left pocket of its silver dime,
 But spare the right,—it holds my golden time !

Does praise delight thee? Choose some *ultra* side ;
 A sure old recipe, and often tried ;
 Be its apostle, congressman, or bard,
 Spokesman, or jokesman, only drive it hard ;
 But know the forfeit which thy choice abides,
 For on two wheels the poor reformer rides—
 One black with epithets the *anti* throws,
 One white with flattery painted by the *pros*.

Though books on MANNERS are not out of print,
 An honest tongue may drop a harmless hint.

Stop not, unthinking, every friend you meet,
To spin your wordy fabric in the street ;
While you are emptying your colloquial pack,
The fiend *Lumbago* jumps upon his back.

Nor cloud his features with the unwelcome tale
Of how he looks, if haply thin and pale ;
Health is a subject for his child, his wife,
And the rude office that insures his life.

Look in his face, to meet thy neighbour's soul,
Not on his garments, to detect a hole ;
"How to observe," is what thy pages show,
Pride of thy sex, Miss Harriet Martineau !
Oh, what a precious book the one would be
That taught observers what they're *not* to see !

I tell in verse,—'twere better done in prose,—
One curious trick that everybody knows ;
Once form this habit, and it's very strange
How long it sticks, how hard it is to change.
Two friendly people, both disposed to smile,
Who meet, like others, every little while,
Instead of passing with a pleasant bow,
And "How d'ye do?" or "How's your uncle now?"
Impelled by feelings in their nature kind,
But slightly weak, and somewhat undefined,
Rush at each other, make a sudden stand,
Begin to talk, expatiate, and expand ;
Each looks quite radiant, seems extremely struck,
Their meeting so was such a piece of luck ;
Each thinks the other thinks he's greatly pleased
To screw the vice in which they both are squeezed ;
So there they talk, in dust, or mud, or snow,
Both bored to death, and both afraid to go !

Your hat once lifted, do not hang your fire,
Nor, like slow Ajax, fighting still, retire ;
When your old castor on your crown you clap,
Go off ; you've mounted your percussion-cap.

Some words on LANGUAGE may be well applied,
And take them kindly, though they touch your
pride ;

Words lead to things ; a scale is more precise,—
Coarse speech, bad grammar, swearing, drinking,
vice.

Our cold North-easter's icy fetter clips
The native freedom of the Saxon lips ;
See the brown peasant of the plastic South,
How all his passions play about his mouth !
With us, the feature that transmits the soul,
A frozen, passive, palsied breathing-hole.
The crampy shackles of the ploughboy's walk
Tie the small muscles when he strives to talk ;
Not all the pumice of the polished town
Can smooth this roughness of the barnyard down ;
Rich, honoured, titled, he betrays his race
By this one mark,—he's awkward in the face ;—
Nature's rude impress, long before he knew
The sunny street that holds the sifted few.

It can't be helped, though, if we're taken young,
We gain some freedom of the lips and tongue ;
But school and college often try in vain
To break the padlock of our boyhood's chain ;
One stubborn word will prove this axiom true,
No quondam rustic can enunciate *view*.

A few brief stanzas may be well employed
To speak of errors we can all avoid.

Learning condemns beyond the reach of hope
 The careless lips that speak of sōap for sōap ;
 Her edict exiles from her fair abode
 The clownish voice that utters rōad for rōad :
 Less stern to him who calls his cōat a cōat,
 And steers his bōat believing it a bōat, "
 She pardoned one, our classic city's boast,
 Who said at Cambridge, mōst instead of mōst,
 But knit her brows and stamped her angry foot
 To hear a Teacher call a rōot a rōot.

Once more ; speak clearly, if you speak at all ;
 Carve every word before you let it fall ;
 Don't, like a lecturer or dramatic star,
 Try over hard to rule the British R ;
 Do put your accents in the proper spot ;
 Don't,—let me beg you,—don't say "How?" for
 "What?"

And, when you stick on conversation's burrs,
 Don't strew your pathway with those dreadful *urs*.

From little matters let us pass to less,
 And lightly touch the mysteries of DRESS ;
 The outward forms the inner man reveal,—
 We guess the pulp before we cut the peel.

I leave the broadcloth,—coats and all the rest,—
 The dangerous waistcoat, called by cockneys "vest,"
 The things named "pants" in certain documents,
 A word not made for gentlemen, but "gents ;"
 One single precept might the whole condense :
 Be sure your tailor is a man of sense ;
 But add a little care, a decent pride,
 And always err upon the sober side.

Three pairs of boots one pair of feet demands,
If polished daily by the owner's hands ;
If the dark menial's visit save from this,
Have twice the number, for he'll sometimes miss.
One pair for critics of the nicer sex,
Close in the instep's clinging circumflex,
Long, narrow, light ; the Gallic boot of love,
A kind of cross between a boot and glove.
Compact, but easy, strong, substantial, square,
Let native art compile the medium pair.
The third remains, and let your tasteful skill
Here show some relics of affection still ;
Let no stiff cowhide, reeking from the tan,
No rough caoutchouc, no deformed brogan,
Disgrace the tapering outline of your feet,
Though yellow torrents gurgle through the street.

Wear seemly gloves ; not black, nor yet too light.
And least of all the pair that once was white ;
Let the dead party where you told your loves
Bury in peace its dead bouquets and gloves ;
Shave like the goat, if so your fancy bids,
But be a parent,—don't neglect your kids.

Have a good hat ; the secret of your looks
Lives with the beaver in Canadian brooks ;
Virtue may flourish in an old cravat,
But man and nature scorn the shocking hat.
Does beauty slight you from her gay abodes ?
Like bright Apollo, you must take to *Rhoades*,—
Mount the new castor,—ice itself will melt ;
Boots, gloves, may fail ; the hat is always felt !

Be shy of breastpins ; plain, well-ironed white,
With small pearl buttons,—two of them in sight,—
Is always genuine, while your gems may pass,
Though real diamonds, for ignoble glass ;
But spurn those paltry Cisatlantic lies,
That round his breast the shabby rustic ties ;
Breathe not the name, profaned to hallow things,
The indignant laundress blushes when she brings !

Our freeborn race, averse to every check,
Has tossed the yoke of Europe from its *neck* ;
From the green prairie to the sea-girt town,
The whole wide nation turns its collars down.

The stately neck is manhood's manliest part ;
It takes the life-blood freshest from the heart ;
With short, curled ringlets close around it spread,
How light and strong it lifts the Grecian head !
Thine, fair Erechtheus of Minerva's wall ; —
Or thine, young athlete of the Louvre's hall,
Smooth as the pillar flashing in the sun
That filled the arena where thy wreaths were won,—
Firm as the band that clasps the antlered spoil,
Strained in the winding anaconda's coil !

I spare the contrast ; it were only kind
To be a little, nay, intensely blind :
Choose for yourself : I know it cuts your ear ;
I know the points will sometimes interfere ;
I know that often, like the filial John,
Whom sleep surprised with half his drapery on,
You show your features to the astonished town
With one side standing and the other down ;—
But, O my friend ! my favourite fellow-man !
If Nature made you on her modern plan,

Sooner than wander with your windpipe bare,—
The fruit of Eden ripening in the air,—
With that lean head-stalk, that protruding chin,
Wear standing collars, were they made of tin !
And have a neck-cloth,—by the throat of Jove !
Cut from the funnel of a rusty stove !

The long-drawn lesson narrows to its close,
Chill, slender, slow, the dwindled current flows ;
Tired of the ripples on its feeble springs,
Once more the Muse unfolds her upward wings.

Land of my birth, with this unhallowed tongue,
Thy hopes, thy dangers, I perchance had sung ;
But who shall sing, in brutal disregard
Of all the essentials of the “ native bard ? ”

Lake, sea, shore, prairie, forest, mountain, fall,
His eye omnivorous must devour them all ;
The tallest summits and the broadest tides
His foot must compass with its giant strides,
Where Ocean thunders, where Missouri rolls,
And tread at once the tropics and the poles ;
His food all forms of earth, fire, water, air,
His home all space, his birthplace everywhere.

Some grave compatriot, having seen perhaps
The pictured page that goes in Worcester's Maps,
And read in earnest what was said in jest,
“ Who drives fat oxen ”—please to add the rest,—
Sprung the odd notion that the poet's dreams
Grow in the ratio of his hills and streams ;
And hence insisted that the aforesaid “ bard,”
Pink of the future,—fancy's pattern-card,—

The babe of nature in the "giant West,"
Must be of course her biggest and her best.

Oh when at length the expected bard shall come,
Land of our pride, to strike thine echoes dumb,
(And many a voice exclaims in prose and rhyme,
"It's getting late, and he's behind his time,")
When all thy mountains clap their hands in joy,
And all thy cataracts thunder, "That's the boy,"—
Say if with him the reign of song shall end,
And Heaven declare its final dividend?

Be calm, dear brother, whose impassioned strain
Comes from an alley watered by a drain ;
The little Mincio, dribbling to the Po,
Beats all the epics of the Hoang Ho ;
If loved in earnest by the tuneful maid,
Don't mind their nonsense,—never be afraid !

The nurse of poets feeds her wingèd brood
By common firesides, on familiar food ;
In a low hamlet, by a narrow stream,
Where bovine rustics used to doze and dream,
She filled young William's fiery fancy full,
While old John Shakespeare talked of beeves and
wool !

No Alpine needle, with its climbing spire,
Brings down for mortals the Promethean fire,
If careless nature have forgot to frame
An altar worthy of the sacred flame.

Unblest by any save the goatherd's lines,
Mont Blanc rose soaring through his "sea of
pines ;"

In vain the rivers from their ice-caves flash ;
No hymn salutes them but the Rauz des Vaches,
Till lazy Coleridge, by the morning's light,
Gazed for a moment on the fields of white,
And lo ! the glaciers found at length a tongue,
Mont Blanc was vocal ! and Chamouni sung !

Children of wealth or want, to each is given
One spot of green, and all the blue of heaven !
Enough, if these their outward shows impart ;
The rest is thine,—the scenery of the heart.

If passion's hectic in thy stanzas glow,
Thy heart's best life-blood ebbing as they flow ;
If with thy verse thy strength and bloom distil,
Drained by the pulses of the fevered thrill ;
If sound's sweet effluence polarise thy brain,
And thoughts turn crystals in thy fluid strain,—
Nor rolling ocean, nor the prairie's bloom,
Nor streaming cliffs, nor rayless cavern's gloom,
Need'st thou, young poet, to inform thy line ;
Thy own broad signet stamps thy song divine !

Let others gaze where silvery streams are rolled,
And chase the rainbow for its cup of gold ;
To thee all landscapes wear a heavenly dye,
Changed in the glance of thy prismatic eye ;
Nature evoked thee in sublimer throes,
For thee her inmost Arethusa flows,—
The mighty mother's living depths are stirred,—
Thou art the starred Osiris of the herd !

A few brief lines ; they touch on solemn chords,
And hearts may leap to hear their honest words ;
Yet, ere the jarring bugle-blast is blown,
The softer lyre shall breathe its soothing tone.

New England ! proudly may thy children claim
Their honoured birthright by its humblest name !
Cold are thy skies, but, ever fresh and clear,
No rank malaria stains thine atmosphere ;
No fungous weeds invade thy scanty soil,
Scarred by the ploughshares of unslumbering toil.
Long may the doctrines by thy sages taught,
Raised from the quarries where their sires have
wrought,
Be like the granite of thy rock-ribbed land,—
As slow to rear, as obdurate to stand :
And as the ice, that leaves thy crystal mine,
Chills the fierce alcohol in the Creole's wine,
So may the doctrines of thy sober school
Keep the hot theories of thy neighbours cool !

If ever, trampling on her ancient path,
Cankered by treachery, or inflamed by wrath,
With smooth " Resolves," or with discordant cries,
The mad Briareus of disunion rise,
Chiefs of New England ! by your sires' renown,
Dash the red torches of the rebel down !
Flood his black hearthstone till its flames expire,
Though your old Sachem fanned his council-fire !

But if at last—her fading cycle run—
The tongue must forfeit what the arm has won,
Then rise, wild Ocean, roll thy surging shock
Full on old Plymouth's desecrated rock !
Scale the proud shaft degenerate hands have hewn,
Where bleeding Valour stained the flowers of June !
Sweep in one tide her spires and turrets down,
And howl her dirge above Monadnock's crown !

List not the tale ; the Pilgrim's hallowed shore,
Though strewn with weeds, is granite at the core ;
Oh rather trust that He who made her free
Will keep her true, as long as faith shall be !

Farewell ! Yet lingering through the destined hour,
Leave, sweet Enchantress, one memorial flower !

An Angel, floating o'er the waste of snow
That clad our Western desert, long ago,
(The same fair spirit, who, unseen by day,
Shone as a star along the Mayflower's way,)
Sent, the first herald of the Heavenly plan,
To choose on earth a resting-place for man,—
Tired with his flight along the unvaried field,
Turned to soar upwards, when his glance revealed
A calm, bright bay, enclosed in rocky bounds,
And at its entrance stood three sister mounds.

The Angel spake : “ This threefold hill shall be
The home of Arts, the nurse of Liberty !
One stately summit from its shaft shall pour
Its deep-red blaze along the darkened shore ;
Emblem of thoughts, that, kindling far and wide,
In danger's night shall be a nation's guide.
One swelling crest the citadel shall crown,
Its slanted bastions black with battle's frown,
And bid the sons that tread its scowling heights
Bare their strong arms for man and all his rights !
One silent steep along the northern wave
Shall hold the patriarch's and the hero's grave ;
When fades the torch, when o'er the peaceful scene
The embattled fortress smiles in living green,
The cross of Faith, the anchor staff of Hope,
Shall stand eternal on its glassy slope ; .

There through all time shall faithful Memory tell,
'Here Virtue toiled, and Patriot Valour fell ;
Thy free, proud fathers slumber at thy side ;
Live as they lived, or perish as they died ! ' ”

*AN AFTER-DINNER POEM.*¹

(TERPSICHORE.)

IN narrowest girdle, O reluctant Muse,
In closest frock and Cinderella shoes,
Bound to the footlights for thy brief display,
One zephyr step, and then dissolve away !

Short is the space that gods and men can spare
To Song's twin brother when she is not there.
Let others water every lusty line,
As Homer's heroes did their purple wine ;
Pierian revellers ! Know in strains like these
The native juice, the real honest squeeze,—
Strains that, diluted to the twentieth power,
In yon grave temple might have filled an hour.
Small room for Fancy's many-chorded lyre,
For Wit's bright rockets with their trains of fire,
For Pathos, struggling vainly to surprise
The iron tutor's tear-denying eyes,
For Mirth, whose finger with delusive wile
Turns the grim key of many a rusty smile,

¹ Read at the Annual Dinner of the Φ B K Society, at Cambridge, August 24, 1843.

For Satire, emptying his corrosive flood
On hissing Folly's gas-exhaling brood,
The pun, the fun, the moral and the joke,
The hit, the thrust, the pugilistic poke,—
Small space for these, so pressed by niggard Time,
Like that false matron, known to nursery rhyme,—
Insidious Morey,—scarce her tale begun,
Ere listening infants weep the story done.

Oh had we room to rip the mighty bags
That Time, the harlequin, has stuffed with rags?
Grant us one moment to unloose the strings,
While the old graybeard shuts his leather wings.
But what a heap of motley trash appears
Crammed in the bundles of successive years!
As the lost rustic on some festal day
Stares through the concourse in its vast array,—
Where in one cake a throng of faces runs,
All stuck together like a sheet of buns,—
And throws the bait of some unheeded name,
Or shoots a wink with most uncertain aim,
So roams my vision, wandering over all,
And strives to choose, but knows not where to fall.

Skins of flayed authors,—husks of dead reviews,—
The turn-coat's clothes,—the office-seeker's shoes,—
Scraps from cold feasts, where conversation runs
Through mouldy toasts to oxidated puns,
And grating songs a listening crowd endures,
Rasped from the throats of bellowing amateurs;—
Sermons, whose writers played such dangerous tricks
Their own heresiarchs called them heretics
(Strange that one term such distant poles should link,
The Priestleyan's copper and the Puseyan's zinc);—

Poems that shuffle with superfluous legs
A blindfold minuet over addled eggs,
Where all the syllables that end in *éd*,
Like old dragoons, have cuts across the head ;—
Essays so dark Champollion might despair
To guess what mummy of a thought was there,
Where our poor English, striped with foreign phrase,
Looks like a zebra in a parson's chaise ;—
Lectures that cut our dinners down to roots,
Or prove (by monkeys) men should stick to fruits ;
Delusive error,—as at trifling charge
Professor Gripes will certify at large ;—
Mesmeric pamphlets, which to facts appeal,
Each fact as slippery as a fresh-caught eel ;—
And figured heads, whose hieroglyphs invite
To wandering knaves that discount fools at sight ;—
Such things as these, with heaps of unpaid bills,
And candy puffs and homœopathic pills,
And ancient bell-crowns with contracted rim,
And bonnets hideous with expanded brim,
And coats whose memory turns the sartor pale,
Their sequels tapering like a lizard's tail ;—
How might we spread them to the smiling day,
And toss them, fluttering like the new-mown hay,
To laughter's light or sorrow's pitying shower,
Were these brief minutes lengthened to an hour.

The narrow moments fit like Sunday shoes,
How vast the heap, how quickly must we choose ;
A few small scraps from out his mountain mass
We snatch in haste, and let the vagrant pass.

This shrunken CRUST that Cerberus could not bite,
Stamped (in one corner) "Pickwick copyright,"

Kneaded by youngsters, raised by flattery's yeast,
Was once a loaf, and helped to make a feast.
He for whose sake the glittering show appears
Has sown the world with laughter and with tears,
And they whose welcome wets the bumper's brim
Have wit and wisdom,—for they all quote him.
So, many a tongue the evening hour prolongs
With spangled speeches,—let alone the songs,—
Statesmen grow merry, lean attorneys laugh,
And weak teetotals warm to half-and-half,
And beardless Tullys, new to festive scenes,
Cut their first crop of youth's precocious greens,
And wits stand ready for impromptu claps,
With loaded barrels and percussion-caps,
And Pathos, cantering through the minor keys,
Waves all her onions to the trembling breeze ;
While the great Feasted views with silent glee
His scattered limbs in Yankee fricassee.

Sweet is the scene where genial friendship plays
The pleasing game of interchanging praise ;
Self-love, grimalkin of the human heart,
Is ever pliant to the master's art ;
Soothed with a word, she peacefully withdraws
And sheathes in velvet her obnoxious claws,
And thrills the hand that smoothes her glossy fur
With the light tremor of her grateful purr.

But what sad music fills the quiet hall
If on her back a feline rival fall ;
And oh, what noises shake the tranquil house
If old Self-interest cheats her of a mouse !

Thou, O my country, hast thy foolish ways,
Too apt to purr at every stranger's praise ;
But, if the stranger touch thy modes or laws,
Off goes the velvet and out come the claws !
And thou, Illustrious ! but too poorly paid
In toasts from Pickwick for thy great crusade,
Though, while the echoes laboured with thy name,
The public trap denied thy little game,
Let other lips our jealous laws revile,—
The marble Talfourd or the rude Carlyle,—
But on thy lids, which Heaven forbids to close
Where'er the light of kindly nature glows,
Let not the dollars that a churl denies
Weigh like the shillings on a dead man's eyes !
Or, if thou wilt, be more discreetly blind,
Nor ask to see all wide extremes combined.
Not in our wastes the dainty blossoms smile
That crowd the gardens of thy scanty isle.
There white-cheeked Luxury weaves a thousand
 charms ;—

Here sun-browned Labour swings his naked arms,
Long are the furrows he must trace between
The ocean's azure and the prairie's green ;
Full many a blank his destined realm displays,
Yet see the promise of his riper days :
Far through yon depths the panting engine moves,
His chariots ringing in their steel-shod grooves ;
And Erie's naiad flings her diamond wave
O'er the wild sea-nymph in her distant cave !
While tasks like these employ his anxious hours,
What if his cornfields are not edged with flowers ?
Though bright as silver the meridian beams
Shine through the crystal of thine English streams,

Turbid and dark the mighty wave is whirled
That drains our Andes and divides a world !

But lo ! a PARCHMENT ! Surely it would seem
The sculptured impress speaks of power supreme !
Some grave design the solemn page must claim
That shows so broadly an emblazoned name ;
A sovereign's promise ! Look, the lines afford
All Honour gives when Caution asks his word :
Their sacred Faith has laid her snow-white hands,
And awful Justice knit her iron bands ;
Yet every leaf is stained with treachery's dye,
And every letter crusted with a lie.
Alas ! no treason has degraded yet
The Arab's salt, the Indian's calumet ;
A simple right, that bears the wanderer's pledge,
Blunts the keen shaft and turns the dagger's edge ;—
While jockeying senates stop to sign and seal,
And freeborn statesmen legislate to steal.
Rise, Europe, tottering with thine Atlas load,
Turn thy proud eye to Freedom's blest abode,
And round her forehead, wreathed with heavenly
 flame,
Bind the dark garland of her daughter's shame !
Ye ocean clouds, that wrap the angry blast,
Coil her stained ensign round its haughty mast,
Or tear the fold that wears so foul a scar,
And drive a bolt through every blackened star !

Once more,—once only,—we must stop so soon,—
What have we here ? A GERMAN-SILVER SPOON ;
A cheap utensil, which we often see
Used by the dabblers in æsthetic tea,

Of slender fabric, somewhat light and thin,
Made of mixed metal, chiefly lead and tin ;
The bowl is shallow, and the handle small,
Marked in large letters with the name JEAN PAUL.
Small as it is, its powers are passing strange,
For all who use it show a wondrous change ;
And first, a fact to make the barbers stare,
It beats Macassar for the growth of hair ;
See those small youngsters whose expansive ears
Maternal kindness grazed with frequent shears ;
Each bristling crop a dangling mass becomes,
And all the spoonies turn to Absaloms !
Nor this alone its magic power displays,
It alters strangely all their works and ways ;
With uncouth words they tire their tender lungs,
The same bald phrases on their hundred tongues ;
“ Ever ” “ The Ages ” in their page appear,
“ Alway ” the bedlamite is called a “ Seer ; ”
On every leaf the “ earnest ” sage may scan,
Portentous bore ! their “ many-sided ” man,—
A weak eclectic, groping vague and dim,
Whose every angle is a half-starved whim,
Blind as a mole and curious as a lynx,
Who rides a beetle, which he calls a “ Sphinx.”
And oh what questions asked in clubfoot rhyme
Of Earth the tongueless and the deaf-mute Time !
Here babbling “ Insight ” shouts in Nature’s ears
His last conundrum on the orbs and spheres ;
There Self-inspection sucks its little thumb,
With “ Whence am I ? ” and “ Wherefore did I
come ? ”
Deluded infants ! will they ever know
Some doubts must darken o’er the world below,

Though all the Platos of the nursery trail
Their "clouds of glory" at the go-cart's tail?
Oh might these couplets their attention claim,
That gain their author the Philistine's name ;
(A stubborn race, that, spurning foreign law,
Was much belaboured with an ass's jaw !)

Melodious Laura ! From the sad retreats
That hold thee, smothered with excess of sweets,
Shade of a shadow, spectre of a dream,
Glance thy wan eye across the Stygian stream !
The slip-shod dreamer treads thy fragrant halls
The sophist's cobwebs hang thy roseate walls,
And o'er the crotchets of thy jingling tunes
The bard of mystery scrawls his crooked "runes."
Yes, thou art gone, with all the tuneful hordes
That candied thoughts in amber-coloured words,
And in the precincts of thy late abodes
The clattering verse-wright hammers Orphic odes.
Thou, soft as zephyr, was content to fly
On the gilt pinions of a balmy sigh ;
He, vast as Phœbus on his burning wheels,
Would stride through ether at Orion's heels ;
Thy emblem, Laura, was a perfume-jar,
And thine, young Orpheus, is a pewter star ;
The balance trembles,—be its verdict told
When the new jargon slumbers with the old !

Cease, playful goddess ! From thine airy bound
Drop like a feather softly to the ground ;
This light bolero grows a ticklish dance,
And there is mischief in thy kindling glance.

To-morrow bids thee, with rebuking frown,
Change thy gauze tunic for a home-made gown,
Too blest by fortune, if the passing day
Adorn thy bosom with its frail bouquet,
But oh still happier if the next forgets
Thy daring steps and dangerous pirouettes !

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

FROM "THE COLLEGIAN," 1830, ILLUSTRATED
ANNUALS, ETC.

"Nescit vox missa reverti."—HORAT. *Ars Poetica*.
"Ab iis quæ non adjuvant quam mollissime oportet pedem
referre."—QUINTILIAN, l. vi. c. 4.



THE MEETING OF THE DRYADS.¹

It was not many centuries since,
When, gathered on the moonlight green,
Beneath the Tree of Liberty,
A ring of weeping sprites was seen.

The freshman's lamp had long been dim,
The voice of busy day was mute,
And tortured Melody had ceased
Her sufferings on the evening flute.

They met not as they once had met,
'To laugh o'er many a jocund tale :
But every pulse was beating low,
And every cheek was cold and pale.

There rose a fair but faded one,
Who oft had cheered them with her song ;

¹ Written after a general pruning of the trees around
Harvard College.

She waved a mutilated arm,
And silence held the listening throng.

"Sweet friends," the gentle nymph began,
"From opening bud to withering leaf,
One common lot has bound us all,
In every change of joy and grief.

"While all around has felt decay,
We rose in ever-living prime,
With broader shade and fresher green,
Beneath the crumbling step of Time.

"When often by our feet has past
Some biped, Nature's walking whim,
Say, have we trimmed one awkward shape,
Or lopped away one crooked limb?

"Go on, fair Science ; soon to thee
Shall Nature yield her idle boast ;
Her vulgar fingers formed a tree,
But thou hast trained it to a post.

"Go, paint the birch's silver rind,
And quilt the peach with softer down ;
Up with the willow's trailing threads,
Off with the sunflower's radiant crown !

"Go, plant the lily on the shore,
And set the rose among the waves ;
And bid the tropic bud unbind
Its silken zone in arctic caves ;

“Bring bellows for the panting winds,
Hang up a lantern by the moon,
And give the nightingale a fife,
And lend the eagle a balloon !

“I cannot smile,—the tide of scorn,
That rolled through every bleeding vein,
Comes kindling fiercer as it flows
Back to its burning source again.

“Again in every quivering leaf
That moment’s agony I feel,
When limbs, that spurned the northern blast,
Shrank from the sacrilegious steel.

“A curse upon the wretch who dared
To crop us with his felon saw !
May every fruit his lip shall taste
Lie like a bullet in his maw.

“In every julep that he drinks
May gout, and bile, and headache be ;
And when he strives to calm his pain,
May colic mingle with his tea.

“May nightshade cluster round his path,
And thistles shoot, and brambles cling ;
May blistering ivy scorch his veins,
And dogwood burn, and nettles sting.

“On him may never shadow fall
When fever racks his throbbing brow,
And his last shilling buy a rope
To hang him on my highest bough !”

She spoke ;—the morning's herald beam
Sprang from the bosom of the sea,
And every mangled sprite returned
In sadness to her wounded tree.¹



THE MYSTERIOUS VISITOR.

THERE was a sound of hurrying feet,
A tramp on echoing stairs,
There was a rush along the aisles,—
It was the hour of prayers.

And on, like Ocean's midnight wave,
The current rolled along,
When, suddenly, a stranger form
Was seen amidst the throng.

He was a dark and swarthy man,
That uninvited guest ;
A faded coat of bottle-green
Was buttoned round his breast.

There was not one among them all
Could say from whence he came ;
Nor beardless boy, nor ancient man,
Could tell that stranger's name.

¹ A little poem, on a similar occasion, may be found in the works of Swift, from which, perhaps, the idea was borrowed ; although I was as much surprised as amused to meet with it some time after writing the preceding lines.

All silent as the sheeted dead,
In spite of sneer and frown,
Fast by a gray-haired senior's side
He sat him boldly down.

There was a look of horror flashed
From out the tutor's eyes ;
When all around him rose to pray,
The stranger did not rise !

A murmur broke along the crowd,
The prayer was at an end ;
With ringing heels and measured tread
A hundred forms descend.

Through sounding aisle, o'er grating stair,
The long procession poured,
Till all were gathered on the seats
Around the Commons board.

That fearful stranger ! down he sat,
Unasked, yet undismayed ;
And on his lip a rising smile
Of scorn or pleasure played.

He took his hat and hung it up,
With slow but earnest air ;
He stripped his coat from off his back,
And placed it on a chair.

Then from the nearest neighbour's side
A knife and plate he drew ;
And, reaching out his hand again,
He took his teacup too.

How fled the sugar from the bowl!
How sunk the azure cream!
They vanished like the shapes that float
Upon a summer's dream.

A long, long draught,—an outstretched hand,—
And crackers, toast, and tea,
They faded from the stranger's touch
Like dew upon the sea.

Then clouds were dark on many a brow,
Fear sat upon their souls,
And in a bitter agony
They clasped their buttered rolls.

A whisper trembled through the crowd,—
Who could the stranger be?
And some were silent, for they thought
A cannibal was he.

What if the creature should arise,—
For he was stout and tall,—
And swallow down a sophomore,
Coat, crow's-foot, cap, and all!

All sullenly the stranger rose;
They sat in mute despair;
He took his hat from off the peg,
His coat from off the chair.

Four freshmen fainted on the seat,
Six swooned upon the floor;
Yet on the fearful being passed,
And shut the chapel door.

There is full many a starving man
That walks in bottle green,
But never more that hungry one
In Commons-hall was seen.

Yet often at the sunset hour,
When tolls the evening bell,
The freshman lingers on the steps,
That frightful tale to tell.



THE TOADSTOOL.

THERE'S a thing that grows by the fainting flower,
And springs in the shade of the lady's bower ;
The lily shrinks, and the rose turns pale,
When they feel its breath in the summer gale,
And the tulip curls its leaves in pride,
And the blue-eyed violet starts aside ;
But the lily may flaunt, and the tulip stare,
For what does the honest toadstool care ?

She does not glow in a painted vest,
And she never blooms on the maiden's breast ;
But she comes, as the saintly sisters do,
In a modest suit of a Quaker hue.
And, when the stars in the evening skies
Are weeping dew from their gentle eyes,
The toad comes out from his hermit cell,
The tale of his faithful love to tell.

Oh there is light in her lover's glance,
That flies to her heart like a silver lance ;

His breeches are made of spotted skin,
His jacket is tight, and his pumps are thin ;
In a cloudless night you may hear his song,
As its pensive melody floats along,
And, if you will look by the moonlight fair,
The trembling form of the toad is there.

And he twines his arms round her slender stem,
In the shade of her velvet diadem ;
But she turns away in her maiden shame,
And will not breathe on the kindling flame ;
He sings at her feet through the livelong night,
And creeps to his cave at the break of light ;
And whenever he comes to the air above,
His throat is swelling with baffled love.



THE SPECTRE PIG.

A BALLAD.

It was the stalwart butcher man,
That knit his swarthy brow,
And said the gentle Pig must die,
And sealed it with a vow.

And oh ! it was the gentle Pig
Lay stretched upon the ground,
And ah ! it was the cruel knife
His little heart that found.

They took him then, those wicked men,
They trailed him all along ;

They put a stick between his lips,
And through his heels a thong ;
And round and round an oaken beam
A hempen cord they flung,
And, like a mighty pendulum,
All solemnly he swung !

Now say thy prayers, thou sinful man,
And think what thou hast done,
And read thy catechism well,
Thou bloody-minded one ;

For if his sprite should walk by night,
It better were for thee,
That thou wert mouldering in the ground,
Or bleaching in the sea.

It was the savage butcher then,
That made a mock of sin,
And swore a very wicked oath,
He did not care a pin.

It was the butcher's youngest son,—
His voice was broke with sighs,
And with his pocket-handkerchief
He wiped his little eyes ;

All young and ignorant was he,
But innocent and mild,
And, in his soft simplicity,
Out spoke the tender child :—

“O father, father, list to me ;
The Pig is deadly sick,
And men have hung him by his heels,
And fed him with a stick.”

It was the bloody butcher then,
That laughed as he would die,
Yet did he soothe the sorrowing child,
And bid him not to cry ;—

“ O Nathan, Nathan, what's a Pig,
That thou shouldst weep and wail ?
Come, bear thee like a butcher's child,
And thou shalt have his tail ! ”

It was the butcher's daughter then,
So slender and so fair,
That sobbed as if her heart would break,
And tore her yellow hair ;

And thus she spoke in thrilling tone,—
Fast fell the tear-drops big ;—
“ Ah ! woe is me ! Alas ! Alas !
The Pig ! The Pig ! The Pig ! ”

Then did her wicked father's lips
Make merry with her woe,
And call her many a naughty name
Because she whimpered so.

Ye need not weep, ye gentle ones,
In vain your tears are shed,
Ye cannot wash his crimson hand,
Ye cannot soothe the dead.

The bright sun folded on his breast
His robes of rosy flame,
And softly over all the west
The shades of evening came.

He slept, and troops of murdered Pigs
Were busy with his dreams ;
Loud rang their wild, unearthly shrieks,
Wide yawned their mortal seams.

The clock struck twelve ; the Dead hath heard :
He opened both his eyes,
And sullenly he shook his tail
To lash the feeding flies.

One quiver of the hempen cord,—
One struggle and one bound,—
With stiffened limb and leaden eye,
The Pig was on the ground !

And straight towards the sleeper's house
His fearful way he wended ;
And hooting owl, and hovering bat,
On midnight wing attended.

Back flew the bolt, up rose the latch,
And open swung the door,
And little mincing feet were heard
Pat, pat along the floor.

Two hoofs upon the sanded floor,
And two upon the bed ;
And they are breathing side by side,
The living and the dead !

“ Now wake, now wake, thou butcher man !
What makes thy cheek so pale ?
Take hold ! take hold ! thou dost not fear
To clasp a spectre's tail ? ”

Untwisted every winding coil ;
The shuddering wretch took hold,
All like an icicle it seemed,
So tapering and so cold.

“Thou com'st with me, thou butcher man !”—
He strives to loose his grasp,
But, faster than the clinging vine,
Those twining spirals clasp.

And open, open swung the door,
And, fleeter than the wind,
The shadowy spectre swept before,
The butcher trailed behind.

Fast fled the darkness of the night,
And morn rose faint and dim ;
They called full loud, they knocked full long,
They did not waken him.

Straight, straight towards that oaken beam,
A trampled pathway ran ;
A ghastly shape was swinging there,—
It was the butcher man.



TO A CAGED LION.

POOR conquered monarch ! though that haughty
glance
Still speaks thy courage unsubdued by time,
And in the grandeur of thy sullen tread
Lives the proud spirit of thy burning clime ;—

Fettered by things that shudder at thy roar,
Torn from thy pathless wilds to pace this narrow
floor !

Thou wast the victor, and all nature shrunk
Before the thunders of thine awful wrath ;
The steel-armed hunter viewed thee from afar,
Fearless and trackless in thy lonely path !
The famished tiger closed his flaming eye,
And crouched and panted as thy step went by !

Thou art the vanquished, and insulting man
Bars thy broad bosom as a sparrow's wing ;
His nerveless arms thine iron sinews bind,
And lead in chains the desert's fallen king ;
Are these the beings that have dared to twine
Their feeble threads around those limbs of thine ?

So must it be ; the weaker, wiser race,
That wields the tempest and that rides the sea,
Even in the stillness of thy solitude
Must teach the lesson of its power to thee ;
And thou, the terror of the trembling wild,
Must bow thy savage strength, the mockery of a
child !



THE STAR AND THE WATER-LILY.

THE sun stepped down from his golden throne,
And lay in the silent sea,
And the Lily had folded her satin leaves,
For a sleepy thing was she ;

What is the Lily dreaming of?
Why crisp the waters blue?
See, see, she is lifting her varnished lid!
Her white leaves are glistening through!

The Rose is cooling his burning cheek
In the lap of the breathless tide;—
The Lily hath sisters fresh and fair,
That would lie by the Rose's side;
He would love her better than all the rest,
And he would be fond and true;
But the Lily unfolded her weary lids,
And looked at the sky so blue.

Remember, remember, thou silly one,
How fast will thy summer glide,
And wilt thou wither a virgin pale,
Or flourish a blooming bride?
“Oh the Rose is old, and thorny, and cold,
And he lives on earth,” said she;
“But the Star is fair, and he lives in the air,
And he shall my bridegroom be.”

But what if the stormy cloud should come,
And ruffle the silver sea?
Would he turn his eye from the distant sky,
To smile on a thing like thee?
Oh no, fair Lily, he will not send
One ray from his far-off throne;
The winds shall blow and the waves shall flow,
And thou wilt be left alone.

There is not a leaf on the mountain-top,
Nor a drop of evening dew,

Nor a golden sand on the sparkling shore,
Nor a pearl in the waters blue,
That he has not cheered with his fickle smile,
And warmed with his faithless beam,—
And will he be true to a pallid flower,
That floats on the quiet stream?
Alas for the Lily ! she would not heed,
But turned to the skies afar,
And bared her breast to the trembling ray
That shot from the rising star ;
The cloud came over the darkened sky,
And over the waters wide :
She looked in vain through the beating rain,
And sank in the stormy tide.



ILLUSTRATION OF A PICTURE.

“A SPANISH GIRL IN REVERIE.”

SHE twirled the string of golden beads,
That round her neck was hung,—
My grandsire's gift; the good old man
Loved girls when he was young ;
And, bending lightly o'er the cord,
And turning half away,
With something like a youthful sigh,
Thus spoke the maiden gray :—

“Well, one may trail her silken robe,
And bind her locks with pearls,
And one may wreath the woodland rose
Among her floating curls ;

And one may tread the dewy grass,
And one the marble floor,
Nor half-hid bosom heave the less,
Nor broidered corset more !

“Some years ago, a dark-eyed girl
Was sitting in the shade,—
There's something brings her to my mind
In that young dreaming maid,—
And in her hand she held a flower,
A flower, whose speaking hue
Said, in the language of the heart,
'Believe the giver true.'

“And, as she looked upon its leaves,
The maiden made a vow
To wear it when the bridal wreath
Was woven for her brow ;
She watched the flower, as, day by day,
The leaflets curled and died ;
But he who gave it never came
To claim her for his bride.

“Oh many a summer's morning glow
Has lent the rose its ray,
And many a winter's drifting snow
Has swept its bloom away ;
But she has kept that faithless pledge
To this, her winter hour,
And keeps it still, herself alone,
And wasted like the flower.”

Her pale lip quivered, and the light
Gleamed in her moistening eyes ;—

I asked her how she liked the tints
In those Castilian skies?
"She thought them misty, —'twas perhaps
Because she stood too near ;"
She turned away, and as she turned
I saw her wipe a tear.

*A ROMAN AQUEDUCT.*

THE sun-browned girl, whose limbs recline
When noon her languid hand has laid
Hot on the green flakes of the pine,
Beneath its narrow disc of shade ;

As, through the flickering noontide glare,
She gazes on the rainbow chain
Of arches, lifting once in air
The rivers of the Roman's plain ;—

Say, does her wandering eye recall
The mountain-current's icy wave,—
Or for the dead one tear let fall,
Whose founts are broken by their grave?

From stone to stone the ivy weaves
Her braided tracery's winding veil,
And lacing stalks and tangled leaves
Nod heavy in the drowsy gale.

And lightly floats the pendent vine,
That swings beneath her slender bow,
Arch answering arch,—whose rounded line
Seems mirrored in the wreath below.

How patient Nature smiles at Fame !
The weeds, that strewed the victor's way,
Feed on his dust to shroud his name,
Green where his proudest towers decay.

See, through that channel, empty now,
The scanty rain its tribute pours,—
Which cooled the lip and laved the brow
Of conquerors from a hundred shores.

Thus bending o'er the nation's bier,
Whose wants the captive earth supplied,
The dew of Memory's passing tear
Falls on the arches of her pride !



*FROM A BACHELOR'S PRIVATE
JOURNAL.*

SWEET Mary, I have never breathed
The love it were in vain to name ;
Though round my heart a serpent wreathed,
I smiled, or strove to smile, the same.

Once more the pulse of Nature glows
With faster throb and fresher fire,
While music round her pathway flows,
Like echoes from a hidden lyre.

And is there none with me to share
The glories of the earth and sky ?
The eagle through the pathless air
Is followed by one burning eye.

Ah no ! the cradled flowers may wake,
Again may flow the frozen sea,
From every cloud a star may break,—
There comes no second Spring to me.

Go,—ere the painted toys of youth
Are crushed beneath the tread of years ;
Ere visions have been chilled to truth,
And hopes are washed away in tears.

Go,—for I will not bid thee weep,—
Too soon my sorrows will be thine,
And evening's troubled air shall sweep
The incense from the broken shrine.

If Heaven can hear the dying tone
Of chords that soon will cease to thrill,
The prayer that Heaven has heard alone
May bless thee when those chords are still.



LA GRISETTE.

AN Clemence ! when I saw thee last
Trip down the Rue de Seine,
And turning, when thy form had past,
I said, " We meet again,"—
I dreamed not in that idle glance
Thy latest image came,
And only left to memory's trance
A shadow and a name.

The few strange words my lips had taught
Thy timid voice to speak,
Their gentler signs, which often brought
Fresh roses to thy cheek,
The trailing of thy long loose hair
Bent o'er my couch of pain,
All, all returned, more sweet, more fair ;
Oh had we met again !

I walked where saint and virgin keep
The vigil lights of Heaven,
I knew that thou hadst woes to weep,
And sins to be forgiven ;
I watched where Genevieve was laid,
I knelt by Mary's shrine,
Beside me low, soft voices prayed ;
Alas ! but where was thine ?

And when the morning sun was bright,
When wind and wave were calm,
And flamed, in thousand-tinted light,
The rose of Notre Dame,
I wandered through the haunts of men,
From Boulevard to Quai,
Till, frowning o'er Saint Etienne,
The Pantheon's shadow lay.

In vain, in vain ; we meet no more,
Nor dream what fates befall ;
And long upon the stranger's shore
My voice on thee may call,

When years have clothed the line in moss
That tells thy name and days,
And withered, on thy simple cross,
The wreaths of Père-la-Chaise !



OUR YANKEE GIRLS.

LET greener lands and bluer skies,
If such the wide earth shows,
With fairer cheeks and brighter eyes,
Match us the star and rose ;
The winds that lift the Georgian's veil ;
Or wave Circassia's curls,
Waft to their shores the sultan's sail,—
Who buys our Yankee girls ?
The gay grisette, whose fingers touch
Love's thousand chords so well ;
The dark Italian, loving much,
But more than *one* can tell ;
And England's fair-haired, blue-eyed dame,
Who binds her brow with pearls ;—
Ye who have seen them, can they shame
Our own sweet Yankee girls ?
And what if court or castle vaunt
Its children loftier born ?—
Who heeds the silken tassel's flaunt
Beside the golden corn ?
They ask not for the dainty toil
Of ribboned knights and earls,
The daughters of the virgin soil,
Our freeborn Yankee girls !

By every hill whose stately pines
Wave their dark arms above
The home where some fair being shines,
To warm the wilds with love,
From barest rock to bleakest shore
Where farthest sail unfurls,
That stars and stripes are streaming o'er,—
God bless our Yankee girls !



L'INCONNUE.

Is thy name Mary, maiden fair ?
Such should, methinks, its music be ;
The sweetest name that mortals bear
Were best befitting thee ;
And she to whom it once was given,
Was half of earth and half of heaven.

I hear thy voice, I see thy smile,
I look upon thy folded hair ;
Ah ! while we dream not they beguile,
Our hearts are in the snare ;
And she who chains a wild bird's wing
Must start not if her captive sing.

So, lady, take the leaf that falls,
To all but thee unseen, unknown ;
When evening shades thy silent walls,
Then read it all alone ;
In stillness read, in darkness seal,
Forget, despise, but not reveal !

STANZAS.

STRANGE! that one lightly whispered tone
Is far, far sweeter unto me,
Than all the sounds that kiss the earth,
Or breathe along the sea ;
But, lady, when thy voice I greet,
Not heavenly music seems so sweet.

I look upon the fair blue skies,
And naught but empty air I see ;
But when I turn me to thine eyes,
It seemeth unto me
Ten thousand angels spread their wings
Within those little azure rings.

The lily hath the softest leaf
That ever western breeze hath fanned,
But thou shalt have the tender flower,
So I may take thy hand ;
That little hand to me doth yield
More joy than all the broidered field.

O lady ! there be many things
That seem right fair, below, above ;
But sure not one among them all
Is half so sweet as love ;—
Let us not pay our vows alone,
But join two altars both in one.

LINES BY A CLERK.

OH ! I did love her dearly,
And gave her toys and rings,
And I thought she meant sincerely,
When she took my pretty things.
But her heart has grown as icy
As a fountain in the fall,
And her love, that was so spicy,
It did not last at all.

I gave her once a locket,
It was filled with my own hair,
And she put it in her pocket
With very special care.
But a jeweller has got it,—
He offered it to me,
And another that is not it
Around her neck I see.

For my cooings and my billings
I do not now complain,
But my dollars and my shillings
Will never come again ;
They were earned with toil and sorrow,
But I never told her that,
And now I have to borrow,
And want another hat.

Think, think, thou cruel Emma,
When thou shalt hear my woe,
And know my sad dilemma,
That thou hast made it so.

See, see my beaver rusty,
 Look, look upon this hole,
 This coat is dim and dusty ;
 Oh let it rend thy soul !

Before the gates of fashion
 I daily bent my knee,
 But I sought the shrine of passion,
 And found my idol,—thee.
 Though never love intenser
 Had bowed a soul before it,
 Thine eye was on the censer,
 And not the hand that bore it.



THE PHILOSOPHER TO HIS LOVE.

DEAREST, a look is but a ray
 Reflected in a certain way ;
 A word, whatever tone it wear,
 Is but a trembling wave of air ;
 A touch, obedience to a clause
 In nature's pure material laws.

The very flowers that bend and meet,
 In sweetening others, grow more sweet ;
 The clouds by day, the stars by night,
 Inweave their floating locks of light ;
 The rainbow, Heaven's own forehead's braid,
 Is but the embrace of sun and shade.

How few that love us have we found !
How wide the world that girds them round !
Like mountain streams we meet and part,
Each living in the other's heart,
Our course unknown, our hope to be
Yet mingled in the distant sea.

But Ocean coils and heaves in vain,
Bound in the subtle moonbeam's chain ;
And love and hope do but obey
Some cold, capricious planet's ray,
Which lights and leads the tide it charms
To Death's dark caves and icy arms.

Alas ! one narrow line is drawn,
That links our sunset with our dawn ;
In mist and shade life's morning rose,
And clouds are round it at its close ;
But ah ! no twilight beam ascends
To whisper where that evening ends.

Oh ! in the hour when I shall feel
Those shadows round my senses steal,
When gentle eyes are weeping o'er
The clay that feels their tears no more,
Then let thy spirit with me be,
Or some sweet angel, likest thee !



THE POET'S LOT.

WHAT is a poet's love?—
To write a girl a sonnet,
To get a ring, or some such thing,
And fustianise upon it.

What is a poet's fame?—
Sad hints about his reason,
And sadder praise from garreteers,
To be returned in season.

Where go the poet's lines?—
Answer, ye evening tapers!
Ye auburn locks, ye golden curls,
Speak from your folded papers!

Child of the ploughshare, smile;
Boy of the counter, grieve not,
Though muses round thy trundle-bed
Their brodered tissue weave not.

The poet's future holds
No civic wreath above him;
Nor slated roof, nor varnished chaise,
Nor wife nor child to love him.

Maid of the village inn,
Who workest woe on satin
(The grass in black, the graves in green,
The epitaph in Latin).

Trust not to them who say,
In stanzas, they adore thee;
Oh rather sleep in churchyard clay,
With urn and cherub o'er thee!

TO A BLANK SHEET OF PAPER.

WAN-VISAGED thing ! thy virgin leaf
To me looks more than deadly pale,
Unknowing what may stain thee yet,—
A poem or a tale.

Who can thy unborn meaning scan?
Can Seer or Sibyl read thee now?
No,—seek to trace the fate of man
Writ on his infant brow.

Love may light on thy snowy cheek,
And shake his Eden-breathing plumes ;
Then shalt thou tell how Lelia smiles
Or Angelina blooms.

Satire may lift his bearded lance,
Forestalling Time's slow-moving scythe,
And, scattered on thy little field,
Disjointed bards may writhe.

Perchance a vision of the night,
Some grizzled spectre, gaunt and thin,
Or sheeted corpse, may stalk along,
Or skeleton may grin !

If it should be in pensive hour
Some sorrow-moving theme I try,
Ah, maiden, how thy tears will fall
For all I doom to die !

But if in merry mood I touch
Thy leaves, then shall the sight of thee
Sow smiles as thick on rosy lips
As ripples on the sea.

The Weekly press shall gladly stoop
 To bind thee up among its sheaves ;
 The Daily steal thy shining ore,
 To gild its leaden leaves.

Thou hast no tongue, yet thou canst speak,
 Till distant shores shall hear the sound ;
 Thou hast no life, yet thou canst breathe
 Fresh life on all around.

Thou art the arena of the wise,
 The noiseless battle-ground of fame ;
 The sky where halos may be wreathed
 Around the humblest name.

Take, then, this treasure to thy trust,
 To win some idle reader's smile,
 Then fade and moulder in the dust,
 Or swell some bonfire's pile.



*TO THE PORTRAIT OF
 "A GENTLEMAN."*

IN THE ATHENÆUM GALLERY.

It may be so,—perhaps thou hast
 A warm and loving heart ;
 I will not blame thee for thy face,
 Poor devil as thou art.

That thing thou fondly deem'st a nose,
 Unsightly though it be,—
 In spite of all the cold world's scorn,
 It may be much to thee.

Those eyes,—among thine elder friends,
Perhaps they pass for blue,—
No matter,—if a man can see,
What more have eyes to do ?

Thy mouth,—that fissure in thy face,
By something like a chin,—
May be a very useful place
To put thy victual in.

I know thou hast a wife at home,
I know thou hast a child,
By that subdued, domestic smile
Upon thy features mild.

That wife sits fearless by thy side,
That cherub on thy knee ;
They do not shudder at thy looks,
They do not shrink from thee.

Above thy mantel is a hook,—
A portrait once was there ;
It was thine only ornament,—
Alas ! that hook is bare.

She begged thee not to let it go,
She begged thee all in vain ;
She wept,—and breathed a trembling prayer
To meet it safe again.

It was a bitter sight to see
That picture torn away ;
It was a solemn thought to think
What all her friends would say !

And often in her calmer hours,
 And in her happy dreams,
 Upon its long-deserted hook
 The absent portrait seems.

Thy wretched infant turns his head
 In melancholy wise,
 And looks to meet the placid stare
 Of those unbending eyes.

I never saw thee, lovely one,—
 Perchance I never may ;
 It is not often that we cross
 Such people in our way ;

But if we meet in distant years,
 Or on some foreign shore,
 Sure I can take my Bible oath
 I've seen that face before.



THE BALLAD OF THE OYSTERMAN.

It was a tall young oysterman lived by the river-side,
 His shop was just upon the bank, his boat was on
 the tide ;

The daughter of a fisherman, that was so straight
 and slim,

Lived over on the other bank, right opposite to him.

It was the pensive oysterman that saw a lovely maid,
 Upon a moonlight evening, a-sitting in the shade ;

He saw her wave her handkerchief, as much as if to
say,
"I'm wide awake, young oysterman, and all the
folks away."

Then up arose the oysterman, and to himself said he,
"I guess I'll leave the skiff at home, for fear that
folks should see ;
I read it in the story-book, that, for to kiss his dear,
Leander swam the Hellespont,—and I will swim this
here."

And he has leaped into the waves, and crossed the
shining stream,
And he has clambered up the bank, all in the moon-
light gleam ;
Oh there were kisses sweet as dew, and words as soft
as rain,—
But they have heard her father's step, and in he leaps
again !

Out spoke the ancient fisherman,— "Oh what was
that, my daughter ?"

"'Twas nothing but a pebble, sir, I threw into the
water."

"And what is that, pray tell me, love, that paddles
off so fast ?"

"It's nothing but a porpoise, sir, that's been a-swim-
ming past."

Out spoke the ancient fisherman,— "Now bring me
my harpoon !

I'll get into my fishing-boat, and fix the fellow soon."

Down fell that pretty innocent, as falls a snow-white
lamb,

Her hair drooped round her pallid cheeks, like sea-
weed on a clam.

Alas for those two loving ones ! she waked not from
her swoond,

And he was taken with the cramp, and in the waves
was drowned ;

But Fate has metamorphosed them, in pity of their
woe,

And now they keep an oyster-shop for mermaids
down below.



A NOONTIDE LYRIC.

THE dinner-bell, the dinner-bell,
Is ringing loud and clear ;
Through hill and plain, through street and lane,
It echoes far and near ;
From curtained hall and whitewashed stall,
Wherever men can hide,
Like bursting waves from ocean caves,
They float upon the tide.

I smell the smell of roasted meat !
I hear the hissing fry !
The beggars know where they can go,
But where, oh where shall I ?
At twelve o'clock men took my hand,
At two they only stare,
And eye me with a fearful look,
As if I were a bear.

The poet lays his laurels down,
And hastens to his greens ;
The happy tailor quits his goose
To riot on his beans ;
The weary cobbler snaps his thread,
The printer leaves his pi ;
His very devil hath a home,
But what, oh what have I ?
Methinks I hear an angel voice,
That softly seems to say :
“ Pale stranger, all may yet be well,
Then wipe thy tears away ;
Erect thy head, and cock thy hat,
And follow me afar,
And thou shalt have a jolly meal,
And charge it at the bar.”
I hear the voice ! I go ! I go !
Prepare your meat and wine !
They little heed their future need
Who pay not when they dine.
Give me to-day the rosy bowl,
Give me one golden dream,—
To-morrow kick away the stool
And dangle from the beam !



THE HOT SEASON.

THE folks, that on the first of May
Wore winter coats and hose,
Began to say, the first of June,
“ Good Lord ! how hot it grows ! ”

At last two Fahrenheits blew up,
And killed two children small,
And one barometer shot dead
A tutor with its ball !

Now all day long the locusts sang
Among the leafless trees ;
Three new hotels warped inside out,
The pumps could only wheeze ;
And ripe old wine, that twenty years
Had cobwebbed o'er in vain,
Came spouting through the rotten corks,
Like Joly's best Champagne !

The Worcester locomotives did
Their trip in half an hour ;
The Lowell cars ran forty miles
Before they checked the power ;
Roll brimstone soon became a drug,
And loco-focos fell ;
All asked for ice, but everywhere
Saltpetre was to sell.

Plump men of mornings ordered tights,
But, ere the scorching noons,
Their candle-moulds had grown as loose
As Cossack pantaloons !
The dogs ran mad,—men could not try
If water they would choose ;
A horse fell dead,—he only left
Four red-hot, rusty shoes !

But soon the people could not bear
The slightest hint of fire ;

Allusions to caloric drew
A flood of savage ire ;
The leaves on heat were all torn out
From every book at school,
And many blackguards kicked and caned
Because they said, " Keep cool ! "

The gas-light companies were mobbed,
The bakers all were shot,
The penny press began to talk
Of Lynching Doctor Nott ;
And all about the warehouse steps
Were angry men in droves,
Crashing and splintering through the doors
To smash the patent stoves !

The abolition men and maids
Were tanned to such a hue,
You scarce could tell them from their friends,
Unless their eyes were blue ;
And when I left, society
Had burst its ancient guards,
And Brattle Street and Temple Place
Were interchanging cards !



A PORTRAIT.

A STILL, sweet, placid, moonlight face,
And slightly nonchalant,
Which seems to claim a middle place
Between one's love and aunt,

Where childhood's star has left a ray
In woman's sunniest sky,
As morning dew and blushing day
On fruit and blossom lie.

And yet,—and yet I cannot love
Those lovely lines on steel ;
They beam too much of heaven above,
Earth's darker shades to feel ;
Perchance some early weeds of care
Around my heart have grown,
And brows unfurrowed seem not fair
Because they mock my own.

Alas ! when Eden's gates were sealed,
How oft some sheltered flower
Breathed o'er the wanderers of the field,
Like their own bridal bower ;
Yet, saddened by its loveliness,
And humbled by its pride,
Earth's fairest child they could not bless,—
It mocked them when they sighed.



AN EVENING THOUGHT.

WRITTEN AT SEA.

IF sometimes in the dark blue eye,
Or in the deep red wine,
Or soothed by gentlest melody,
Still warms this heart of mine,

Yet something colder in the blood,
And calmer in the brain,
Have whispered that my youth's bright flood
Ebbs, not to flow again.

If by Helvetia's azure lake,
Or Arno's yellow stream,
Each star of memory could awake,
As in my first young dream,
I know that when mine eye shall greet
The hillsides bleak and bare,
That gird my home, it will not meet
My childhood's sunsets there.

Oh when love's first, sweet, stolen kiss
Burned on my boyish brow,
Was that young forehead worn as this?
Was that flushed cheek as now?
Were that wild pulse and throbbing heart
Like these, which vainly strive,
In thankless strains of soulless art,
To dream themselves alive?

Alas! the morning dew is gone,
Gone ere the full of day;
Life's iron fetter still is on,
Its wreaths all torn away;
Happy if still some casual hour
Can warm the fading shrine,
Too soon to chill beyond the power
Of love, or song, or wine!



THE WASP AND THE HORNET.

THE two proud sisters of the sea,
In glory and in doom!—
Well may the eternal waters be
Their broad, unsculptured tomb!
The wind that rings along the wave,
The clear, unshadowed sun,
Are torch and trumpet o'er the brave,
Whose last green wreath is won!

No stranger hand their banners furled,
No victor's shout they heard;
Unseen, above them ocean curled,
Save by his own pale bird;
The gnashing billows heaved and fell;
Wild shrieked the midnight gale;
Far, far beneath the morning swell
Were pennon, spar, and sail.

The land of Freedom! Sea and shore
Are guarded now, as when
Her ebbing waves to victory bore
Fair barks and gallant men;
Oh many a ship of prouder name
May wave her starry fold,
Nor trail, with deeper light of fame,
The paths they swept of old!



“*QUI VIVE.*”

“*Qui vive!*” The sentry’s musket rings,
The channelled bayonet gleams ;
High o’er him, like a raven’s wings,
The broad tricoloured banner flings
Its shadow, rustling as it swings
Pale in the moonlight beams ;
Pass on ; while steel-clad sentries keep
Their vigil o’er the monarch’s sleep,
Thy bare unguarded breast
Asks not the unbroken, bristling zone
That girds yon sceptred trembler’s throne ;—
Pass on, and take thy rest !

“*Qui vive!*” How oft the midnight air
That startling cry has borne !
How oft the evening breeze has fanned
The banner of this haughty land,
O’er mountain snow and desert sand,
Ere yet its folds were torn !
Through Jena’s carnage flying red,
Or tossing o’er Marengo’s dead,
Or curling on the towers
Where Austria’s eagle quivers yet,
And suns the ruffled plumage, wet
With battle’s crimson showers !

“*Qui vive!*” And is the sentry’s cry,—
The sleepless soldier’s hand,—
Are these—the painted folds that fly
And lift their emblems, printed high—

On morning mist and sunset sky —
 The guardians of a land ?
 No ! If the patriot's pulses sleep,
 How vain the watch that hirelings keep,—
 The idle flag that waves,
 When Conquest with his iron heel,
 Treads down the standards and the steel
 That belt the soil of slaves !



SONGS IN MANY KEYS.



THE piping of our slender, peaceful reeds
Whispers uncared for while the trumpets bray ;
Song is thin air ; our hearts' exulting play
Beats time but to the tread of marching deeds,
Following the mighty van that Freedom leads,
Her glorious standard flaming to the day !
'The crimsoned pavement where a hero bleeds
Breathes nobler lessons than the poet's lay.
Strong arms, broad breasts, brave hearts, are better
worth

Than strains that sing the ravished echoes dumb.
Hark ! 'tis the loud reverberating drum
Rolls o'er the prairied West, the rock-bound North :
The myriad-handed Future stretches forth
Its shadowy palms. Behold, we come,—we come !

'Turn o'er these idle leaves. Such toys as these
Were not unsought for, as, in languid dreams,
We lay beside our lotus-feeding streams,
And nursed our fancies in forgetful ease.
It matters little if they pall or please,
Dropping untimely, while the sudden gleams
Glare from the mustering clouds whose blackness
seems

'Too swollen to hold its lightning from the trees.

Yet, in some lull of passion, when at last
 These calm revolving moons that come and go—
 Turning our months to years, they creep so slow—
 Have brought us rest, the not unwelcome past
 May flutter to thee through these leaflets, cast
 On the wild winds that all around us blow.

May 1, 1861.



(1849-1856.)

AGNES.

PART FIRST.—THE KNIGHT.

THE tale I tell is gospel true,
 As all the bookmen know,
 And pilgrims who have strayed to view
 The wrecks still left to show.

The old, old story,—fair, and young,
 And fond,—and not too wise,—
 That matrons tell, with sharpened tongue,
 To maids with downcast eyes.

Ah ! maidens err and matrons warn
 Beneath the coldest sky ;
 Love lurks amid the tasselled corn
 As in the bearded rye !

But who would dream our sober sires
 Had learned the old world's ways,
 And warmed their hearths with lawless fires
 In Shirley's homespun days ?

'Tis like some poet's pictured trance
His idle rhymes recite,—
This old New-England-horn romance
Of Agnes and the Knight ;

Yet, known to all the country round,
Their home is standing still,
Between Wachuset's lonely mound
And Shawmut's threefold hill.

—One hour we rumble on the rail,
One half-hour guide the rein,
We reach at last, o'er hill and dale,
The village on the plain.

With blackening wall and mossy roof,
With stained and warping floor,
A stately mansion stands aloof
And bars its haughty door.

This lowlier portal may be tried,
That breaks the gable wall ;
And lo ! with arches opening wide,
Sir Harry Frankland's hall !

'Twas in the second George's day
They sought the forest shade,
The knotted trunks they cleared away,
The massive beams they laid,

They piled the rock-hewn chimney tall,
They smoothed the terraced ground,
They reared the marble-pillared wall
That fenced the mansion round.

Far stretched beyond the village bound
The Master's broad domain :
With page and valet, horse and hound,
He kept a goodly train.

And, all the midland county through,
The ploughman stopped to gaze
Whene'er his chariot swept in view
Behind the shining bays,

With mute obeisance, grave and slow,
Repaid by nod polite,—
For such the way with high and low
Till after Concord fight.

Nor less to courtly circles known
That graced the three-hilled town
With far-off splendours of the Throne,
And glimmerings from the Crown ;

Wise Phipps, who held the seals of State
For Shirley over sea ;
Brave Knowles, whose pressgang moved of late
The King Street mob's decree ;

And judges grave, and colonels grand,
Fair dames and stately men,
The mighty people of the land,
The " World " of there and then.

'Twas strange no Chloe's "beauteous Form,"
And " Eyes' cœlestial Blew,"
This Strephon of the West could warm,
No Nymph his Heart subdue !

Perchance he wooed as gallants use,
Whom fleeting loves enchain,
But still unfettered, free to choose,
Would brook no bridle-rein.

He saw the fairest of the fair,
But smiled alike on all ;
No band his roving foot might snare,
Nor ring his hand enthrall.

PART SECOND.—THE MAIDEN.

WHY seeks the Knight that rocky cape
Beyond the Bay of Lynn ?
What chance his wayward course may shape
To reach its village inn ?

No story tells ; whate'er we guess,
The past lies deaf and still,
But Fate, who rules to blight or bless,
Can lead us where she will.

Make way ! Sir Harry's coach and four,
And liveried grooms that ride !
They cross the ferry, touch the shore
On Winnisimmet's side.

They hear the wash on Chelsea Beach,—
The level marsh they pass,
Where miles on miles the desert reach
Is rough with bitter grass.

The shining horses foam and pant,
And now the smells begin
Of fishy Swampscot, salt Nahant,
And leather-scented Lynn.

Next, on their left, the slender spires,
 And glittering vanes, that crown
 The home of Salem's frugal sires,
 The old, witch-haunted town.

So onward, o'er the rugged way
 That runs through rocks and sand,
 Showered by the tempest-driven spray,
 From bays on either hand,

That shut between their outstretched arms
 The crews of Marblehead,
 The lords of ocean's watery farms,
 Who plough the waves for bread.

At last the ancient inn appears,
 The spreading elm below,
 Whose flapping sign these fifty years
 Has seesawed to and fro.

How fair the azure fields in sight
 Before the low-browed inn !
 The tumbling billows fringe with light
 The crescent shore of Lynn ;

Nahant thrusts outward through the waves
 Her arm of yellow sand,
 And breaks the roaring surge that braves
 The gauntlet on her hand ;

With eddying whirl the waters lock
 Yon treeless mound forlorn,
 The sharp-winged sea-fowl's breeding-rock,
 That fronts the Spouting Horn ;

Then free the white-sailed shallops glide,
And wide the ocean smiles,
Till, shoreward bent, his streams divide
The two bare Misery Isles.

The master's silent signal stays
The wearied cavalcade ;
The coachman reins his smoking bays
Beneath the elm-tree's shade.

A gathering on the village green !
The cocked-hats crowd to see,
On legs in ancient velveten,
With buckles at the knee.

A clustering round the tavern-door,
Of square-toed village boys,
Still wearing, as their grandsires wore,
The old-world corduroys.

A scampering at the "Fountain" inn,—
A rush of great and small,—
With hurrying servants' mingled din
And screaming matron's call !

Poor Agnes ! with her work half done
They caught her unaware ;
As, humbly, like a praying nun,
She knelt upon the stair ;

Bent o'er the steps, with lowliest mien
She knelt, but not to pray,—
Her little hands must keep them clean,
And wash their stains away.

A foot, an ankle, bare and white,
 Her girlish shapes betrayed,—
 “Ha! Nymphs and Graces!” spoke the Knight;
 “Look up! my beauteous Maid!”

She turned,—a reddening rose in bud,
 Its calyx half withdrawn,—
 Her cheek on fire with damasked blood
 Of girlhood’s glowing dawn!

He searched her features through and through
 As royal lovers look
 On lowly maidens, when they woo
 Without the ring and book.

“Come hither, Fair one! Here, my Sweet!
 Nay, prithee, look not down!
 Take this to shoe those little feet,”—
 He tossed a silver crown.

A sudden paleness struck her brow,—
 A swifter flush succeeds;
 It burns her cheek; it kindles now
 Beneath her golden beads.

She flitted, but the glittering eye
 Still sought the lovely face.
 Who was she? What, and whence? and why
 Doomed to such menial place?

A skipper’s daughter,—so they said,—
 Left orphan by the gale
 That cost the fleet of Marblehead
 And Gloucester thirty sail.

Ah! many a lonely home is found
Along the Essex shore,
That cheered its goodman outward bound,
And sees his face no more!

“Not so,” the matron whispered,—“sure
No orphan girl is she,—
The Surraige folk are deadly poor
Since Edward left the sea,

“And Mary, with her growing brood,
Has work enough to do
To find the children clothes and food
With Thomas, John, and Hugh,

“This girl of Mary’s, growing tall,—
(Just turned her sixteenth year,)—
To earn her bread and help them all,
Would work as housemaid here.”

So Agnes, with her golden beads,
Had naught beside as dower,
Grew at the wayside with the weeds,
Herself a garden-flower.

’Twas strange, ’twas sad,—so fresh, so fair!
Thus Pity’s voice began.
Such grace! an angel’s shape and air!
The half-heard whisper ran.

For eyes could see in George’s time,
As now in later days,
And lips could shape, in prose and rhyme,
The honeyed breath of praise.

No time to woo ! The train must go
 Long ere the sun is down,
 To reach, before the night-winds blow,
 The many-steepled town.

'Tis midnight,—street and square are still
 Dark roll the whispering waves
 That lap the piers beneath the hill
 Ridged thick with ancient graves.

Ah, gentle sleep ! thy hand will smooth
 The weary couch of pain,
 When all thy poppies fail to soothe
 The lover's throbbing brain !

'Tis morn,—the orange-mantled sun
 Breaks through the fading gray,
 And long and loud the Castle gun
 Peals o'er the glistening bay.

"Thank God 'tis day !" With eager eye
 He hails the morning's shine :—
 "If art can win, or gold can buy,
 The maiden shall be mine !"

PART THIRD.—THE CONQUEST.

"WHO saw this hussy when she came?
 What is the wench, and who?"
 They whisper. "*Agnes*,—is her name?
 Pray what has she to do?"

The housemaids parley at the gate,
 The scullions on the stair,
 And in the footmen's grave debate
 The butler deigns to share.

Black Dinah, stolen when a child,
And sold on Boston Pier,
Grown up in service, petted, spoiled,
Speaks in the coachman's ear:

"What, all this household at his will?
And all are yet too few?
More servants, and more servants still,—
This pert young madam too!"

"*Servant!* fine servant!" laughed aloud
The man of coach and steeds;
"She looks too fair, she steps too proud,
This girl with golden beads!"

"I tell you, you may fret and frown,
And call her what you choose,
You'll find my Lady in her gown,
Your Mistress in her shoes!"

Ah, gentle maidens, free from blame,
God grant you never know
The little whisper, loud with shame,
That makes the world your foe!

Why tell the lordly flatterer's art,
That won the maiden's ear,—
The fluttering of the frightened heart,
The blush, the smile, the tear?

Alas! it were the saddening tale
That every language knows,—
The wooing wind, the yielding sail,
The sunbeam and the rose.

And now the gown of sober stuff
Has changed to fair brocade,
With broidered hem, and hanging cuff,
And flower of silken braid ;

And clasped around her blanching wrist
A jewelled bracelet shines,
Her flowing tresses' massive twist
A glittering net confines ;

And mingling with their truant wave
A fretted chain is hung ;
But ah ! the gift her mother gave,—
Its beads are all unstrung !

Her place is at the master's board,
Where none disputes her claim ;
She walks beside the mansion's lord,
His bride in all but name.

The busy tongues have ceased to talk,
Or speak in softened tone,
So gracious in her daily walk
The angel light has shown.

No want that kindness may relieve
Assails her heart in vain,
The lifting of a ragged sleeve
Will check her palfrey's rein.

A thoughtful calm, a quiet grace
In every movement shown,
Reveal her moulded for the place
She may not call her own.

And, save that on her youthful brow
There broods a shadowy care,
No matron sealed with holy vow
In all the land so fair !

PART FOURTH,—THE RESCUE.

A SHIP comes foaming up the bay,
Along the pier she glides ;
Before her furrow melts away,
A courier mounts and rides.

“Haste, Haste, post Haste !” the letters bear
“Sir Harry Frankland, These.”
Sad news to tell the loving pair !
The Knight must cross the seas.

“Alas ! we part !”—the lips that spoke
Lost all their rosy red,
As when a crystal cup is broke,
And all its wine is shed.

“Nay, droop not thus,—where’er,” he cried,
“I go by land or sea,
My love, my life, my joy, my pride,
Thy place is still by me !”

Through town and city, far and wide,
Their wandering feet have strayed,
From Alpine lake to ocean tide,
And cold Sierra’s shade.

At length they see the waters gleam
Amid the fragrant bowers,
Where Lisbon mirrors in the stream
Her belt of ancient towers.

Red is the orange on its bough,
To-morrow's sun shall fling
O'er Cintra's hazel-shaded brow
The flush of April's wing.

The streets are loud with noisy mirth,
They dance on every green ;
The morning's dial marks the birth
Of proud Braganza's queen.

At eve beneath their pictured dome
The gilded courtiers throng ;
The broad moidores have cheated Rome
Of all her lords of song.

Ah ! Lisbon dreams not of the day—
Pleased with her painted scenes—
When all her towers shall slide away
As now these canvas screens !

The spring has passed, the summer fled,
And yet they linger still,
Though autumn's rustling leaves have spread
The flank of Cintra's hill.

The town has learned their Saxon name,
And touched their English gold,
Nor tale of doubt nor hint of blame
From over sea is told.

Three hours the first November dawn
Has climbed with feeble ray
Through mists like heavy curtains drawn
Before the darkened day.

How still the muffled echoes sleep !
Hark ! hark ! a hollow sound,—
A noise like chariots rumbling deep
Beneath the solid ground.

The channel lifts, the water slides,
And bares its bar of sand ;
Anon a mountain billow strides
And crashes o'er the land.

The turrets lean, the steeples reel
Like masts on ocean's swell,
And clash a long discordant peal,
The death-doomed city's knell.

The pavement bursts, the earth upheaves
Beneath the staggering town !
The turrets crack—the castle cleaves—
The spires come rushing down,

Around, the lurid mountains glow
With strange unearthly gleams ;
While black abysses gape below,
Then close in jagged seams.

The earth has folded like a wave,
And thrice a thousand score,
Clasped, shroudless, in their closing grave,
The sun shall see no more !

And all is over. Street and square
In ruined heaps are piled ;
Ah ! where is she, so frail, so fair,
Amid the tumult wild ?

Unscathed, she treads the wreck-piled street,
 Whose narrow gaps afford
 A pathway for her bleeding feet,
 To seek her absent lord.

A temple's broken walls arrest
 Her wild and wandering eyes ;
 Beneath its shattered portal pressed
 Her lord unconscious lies.

The power that living hearts obey
 Shall lifeless blocks withstand ?
 Love led her footsteps where he lay,—
 Love nerves her woman's hand :

One cry,—the marble shaft she grasps,—
 Up heaves the ponderous stone :—
 He breathes,—her fainting form he clasps,—
 Her life has bought his own !

PART FIFTH.—THE REWARD.

How like the starless night of death
 Our being's brief eclipse,
 When faltering heart and failing breath
 Have bleached the fading lips !

She lives ! What guerdon shall repay
 His debt of ransomed life ?
 One word can charm all wrongs away,—
 The sacred name of WIFE !

The love that won her girlish charms
 Must shield her matron fame,
 And write beneath the Frankland arms
 The village beauty's name.

Go, call the priest ! no vain delay
Shall dim the sacred ring !
Who knows what change the passing day,
The fleeting hour, may bring ?

Before the holy altar bent,
There kneels a goodly pair ;
A stately man, of high descent,
A woman, passing fair.

No jewels lend the blinding sheen
That meaner beauty needs,
But on her bosom heaves unseen
A string of golden beads.

The vow is spoke,—the prayer is said,—
And with a gentle pride
The Lady Agnes lifts her head,
Sir Harry Frankland's bride.

No more her faithful heart shall bear
Those griefs so meekly borne,—
The passing sneer, the freezing stare,
The icy look of scorn ;

No more the blue-eyed English dames
Their haughty lips shall curl,
Whene'er a hissing whisper names
The poor New England girl.

But stay !—his mother's haughty brow,—
The pride of ancient race,—
Will plighted faith, and holy vow,
Win back her fond embrace ?

Too well she knew the saddening tale
Of love no vow had blest,
That turned his blushing honours pale
And stained his knightly crest.

They seek his Northern home,—alas :
He goes alone before ;—
His own dear Agnes may not pass
The proud, ancestral door.

He stood before the stately dame ;
He spoke ; she calmly heard,
But not to pity, nor to blame ;
She breathed no single word.

He told his love,—her faith betrayed ;
She heard with tearless eyes ;
Could she forgive the erring maid ?
She stared in cold surprise.

How fond her heart, he told,—how true
The haughty eyelids fell ;—
The kindly deeds she loved to do ;
She murmured, “ It is well.”

But when he told that fearful day,
And how her feet were led
To where entombed in life he lay,
The breathing with the dead,

And how she bruised her tender breasts
Against the crushing stone,
That still the strong-armed clown protests
No man can lift alone,—

Oh then the frozen spring was broke ;
By turns she wept and smiled ;—
“ Sweet Agnes ! ” so the mother spoke,
“ God bless my angel child !

“ She saved thee from the jaws of death,—
’Tis thine to right her wrongs ;
I tell thee,—I, who gave thee breath,—
To her thy life belongs ! ”

Thus Agnes won her noble name,
Her lawless lover’s hand ;
The lowly maiden so became
A lady in the land !

PART SIXTH.—CONCLUSION.

THE tale is done ; it little needs
To track their after ways,
And string again the golden beads
Of love’s uncounted days.

They leave the fair ancestral isle
For bleak New England’s shore ;
How gracious is the courtly smile
Of all who frowned before !

Again through Lisbon’s orange bowers
They watch the river’s gleam,
And shudder as her shadowy towers
Shake in the trembling stream.

Fate parts at length the fondest pair ;
 His cheek, alas ! grows pale ;
 The breast that trampling death could spare
 His noiseless shafts assail.

He longs to change the heaven of blue
 For England's clouded sky,—
 To breathe the air his boyhood knew ;
 He seeks them but to die.

—Hard by the terraced hillside town,
 Where healing streamlets run,
 Still sparkling with their old renown,—
 The “Waters of the Sun,”—

The Lady Agnes raised the stone
 That marks his honoured grave,
 And there Sir Harry sleeps alone
 By Wiltshire Avon's wave.

The home of early love was dear ;
 She sought its peaceful shade,
 And kept her state for many a year,
 With none to make afraid.

At last the evil days were come
 That saw the red cross fall ;
 She hears the rebels' rattling drum,—
 Farewell to Frankland Hall !

—I tell you, as my tale began,
 The Hall is standing still ;
 And you, kind listener, maid or man,
 May see it if you will.

The box is glistening huge and green,
Like trees the lilacs grow,
Three elms high-arching still are seen,
And one lies stretched below.

The hangings, rough with velvet flowers,
Flap on the latticed wall ;
And o'er the mossy ridge-pole towers
The rock-hewn chimney tall.

The doors on mighty hinges clash
With massive bolt and bar,
The heavy English-moulded sash
Scarce can the night-winds jar.

Behold the chosen room he sought
Alone, to fast and pray,
Each year, as chill November brought
The dismal earthquake day.

There hung the rapier blade he wore,
Bent in its flattened sheath ;
The coat the shrieking woman tore
Caught in her clenching teeth ;—

The coat with tarnished silver lace
She snapped at as she slid,
And down upon her death-white face
Crashed the huge coffin's lid.

A graded terrace yet remains ;
If on its turf we stand
And look along the wooded plains
That stretch on either hand,

The broken forest walls define
A dim, receding view,
Where, on the far horizon's line,
He cut his vista through.

If further story you shall crave,
Or ask for living proof,
Go see old Julia, born a slave
Beneath Sir Harry's roof.

She told me half that I have told,
And she remembers well
The mansion as it looked of old
Before its glories fell ;—

The box, when round the terraced square
Its glossy wall was drawn ;
The climbing vines, the snow-balls fair,
The roses on the lawn.

And Julia says, with truthful look
Stamped on her wrinkled face,
That in her own black hands she took
The coat with silver lace.

And you may hold the story light,
Or, if you like, believe ;
But there it was, the woman's bite,—
A mouthful from the sleeve.

Now go your ways ;—I need not tell
The moral of my rhyme ;
But, youths and maidens, ponder well
This tale of olden time !

THE PLOUGHMAN.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE BERKSHIRE
AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY,
OCT. 4, 1849.

CLEAR the brown path, to meet his coulter's gleam !
Lo ! on he comes, behind his smoking team.
With toil's bright dewdrops on his sunburnt brow,
The lord of earth, the hero of the plough !

First in the field before the reddening sun,
Last in the shadows when the day is done,
Line after line, along the bursting sod,
Marks the broad acres where his feet have trod ;
Still, where he treads, the stubborn clods divide,
The smooth, fresh furrow opens deep and wide ;
Matted and dense the tangled turf upheaves,
Mellow and dark the ridgy cornfield cleaves ;
Up the steep hillside, where the labouring train
Slants the long track that scores the level plain ;
Through the moist valley, clogged with oozing clay,
The patient convoy breaks its destined way ;
At every turn the loosening chains resound,
The swinging ploughshare circles glistening round,
Till the wide field one billowy waste appears,
And wearied hands unbind the panting steers.

These are the hands whose sturdy labour brings
The peasant's food, the golden pomp of kings ;

This is the page, whose letters shall be seen
Changed by the sun to words of living green ;
This the scholar, whose immortal pen
Spells the first lesson hunger taught to men ;
These are the lines which heaven-commanded Toil
Shows on his deed,—the charter of the soil !

Oh gracious Mother, whose benignant breast
Wakes us to life, and lulls us all to rest,
How thy sweet features, kind to every clime,
Mock with their smile the wrinkled front of time !
We stain thy flowers,—they blossom o'er the dead ;
We rend thy bosom, and it gives us bread ;
O'er the red field that trampling strife has torn,
Waves the green plumage of thy tasselled corn ;
Our maddening conflicts scar thy fairest plain,
Still thy soft answer is the growing grain.
Yet, oh our Mother, while uncounted charms
Steal round our hearts in thine embracing arms,
Let not our virtues in thy love decay,
And thy fond sweetness waste our strength away.

No ! by these hills, whose banners now displayed
In blazing cohorts Autumn has arrayed ;
By yon twin summits, on whose splintery crests
The tossing hemlocks hold the eagles' nests ;
By these fair plains the mountain circle screens,
And feeds with streamlets from its dark ravines,—
True to their home, these faithful arms shall toil
To crown with peace their own untainted soil ;
And, true to God, to freedom, to mankind,
If her chained bandogs Faction shall unbind,

These stately forms, that bending even now
Bowed their strong manhood to the humble plough,
Shall rise erect, the guardians of the land,
The same stern iron in the same right hand,
Till o'er their hills the shouts of triumph run,
The sword has rescued what the ploughshare won !



PICTURES
FROM
OCCASIONAL POEMS.

1850-56.



SPRING.

WINTER is past ; the heart of Nature warms
Beneath the wrecks of unresisted storms ;
Doubtful at first, suspected more than seen,
The southern slopes are fringed with tender green ;
On sheltered banks, beneath the dripping eaves,
Spring's earliest nurslings spread their glowing leaves,
Bright with the hues from wider pictures won,
White, azure, golden,—drift, or sky, or sun,
The snowdrop, bearing on her patient breast
The frozen trophy torn from Winter's crest ;
The violet, gazing on the arch of blue
Till her own iris wears its deepened hue ;
The spendthrift crocus, bursting through the mould
Naked and shivering with his cup of gold.

Swelled with new life, the darkening elm on high
 Prints her thick buds against the spotted sky ;
 On all her boughs the stately chestnut cleaves
 The gummy shroud that wraps her embryo leaves ;
 The house-fly, stealing from his narrow grave,
 Drugged with the opiate that November gave,
 Beats with faint wing against the sunny pane,
 Or crawls, tenacious, o'er its lucid plain ;
 From shaded chinks of lichen-crustcd walls,
 In languid curves, the gliding serpent crawls ;
 The bog's green harper, thawing from his sleep,
 Twangs a hoarse note and tries a shortened leap ;
 On floating rails that face the softening noons
 The still shy turtles rage their dark platoons,
 Or, toiling aimless o'er the mellowing fields,
 Trail through the grass their tessclated shields.

At last young April, ever frail and fair,
 Wooed by her playmate with the golden hair,
 Chased to the margin of receding floods
 O'er the soft meadows starred with opening buds,
 In tears and blushes sighs herself away,
 And hides her cheek beneath the flowers of May.

Then the proud tulip lights her beacon blaze,
 Her clustering curls the hyacinth displays ;
 O'er her tall blades the crested fleur-de-lis,
 Like blue-eyed Pallas, towers erect and free ;
 With yellower flames the lengthened sunshine glows,
 And love lays bare the passion-breathing rose ;
 Queen of the lake, along its reedy verge
 The rival lily hastens to emerge,

Her snowy shoulders glistening as she strips,
Till morn is sultan of her parted lips.

Then bursts the song from every leafy glade,
The yielding season's bridal serenade ;
Then flash the wings returning Summer calls
Through the deep arches of her forest halls,—
The bluebird, breathing from his azure plumes
The fragrance borrowed where the myrtle blooms ;
The thrush, poor wanderer, dropping meekly down,
Clad in his remnant of autumnal brown ;
The oriole, drifting like a flake of fire
Rent by a whirlwind from a blazing spire ;
The robin, jerking his spasmodic throat,
Repeats, imperious, his *staccato* note ;
The crack-brained bobolink courts his crazy mate,
Poised on a bulrush tipsy with his weight ;
Nay, in his cage the lone canary sings,
Feels the soft air, and spreads his idle wings.

Why dream I here within these caging walls,
Deaf to her voice, while blooming Nature calls ;
Peering and gazing with insatiate looks
Through blinding lenses, or in wearying books ?
Off, gloomy spectres of the shrivelled past !
Fly with the leaves that fill the autumn blast !
Ye imps of Science, whose relentless chains
Lock the warm tides within these living veins,
Close your dim cavern, while its captive strays
Dazzled and giddy in the morning's blaze !



THE STUDY.

YET in the darksome crypt I left so late,
 Whose only altar is its rusted grate,—
 Sepulchral, rayless, joyless as it seems,
 Shamed by the glare of May's refulgent beams,—
 While the dim seasons dragged their shrouded train,
 Its paler splendours were not quite in vain.
 From these dull bars the cheerful firelight's glow
 Streamed through the casement o'er the spectral
 snow ;

Here, while the night-wind wreaked its frantic will
 On the loose ocean and the rock-bound hill,
 Rent the cracked topsail from its quivering yard,
 And rived the oak a thousand storms had scarred,
 Fenced by these walls the peaceful taper shone,
 Nor felt a breath to slant its trembling cone.

Not all unblest the mild interior scene
 When the red curtain spread its falling screen ;
 O'er some light task the lonely hours were past,
 And the long evening only flew too fast ;
 Or the wide chair its leathern arms would lend
 In genial welcome to some easy friend,
 Stretched on its bosom with relaxing nerves,
 Slow moulding, plastic, to its hollow curves ;
 Perchance indulging, if of generous creed,
 In brave Sir Walter's dream-compelling weed.
 Or, happier still, the evening hour would bring
 To the round table its expected ring,
 And while the punch-bowl's sounding depths were
 stirred,—
 Its silver cherubs smiling as they heard,—

Our hearts would open, as at evening's hour
The close-sealed primrose frees its hidden flower.

Such the warm life this dim retreat has known,
Not quite deserted when its guests were flown ;
Nay, filled with friends, an unobtrusive set,
Guiltless of calls and cards and etiquette,
Ready to answer, never known to ask,
Claiming no service, prompt for every task.

On those dark shelves no housewife hand profanes,
O'er his mute files the monarch folio reigns ;
A mingled race, the wreck of chance and time,
That talk all tongues and breathe of every clime,
Each knows his place, and each may claim his part
In some quaint corner of his master's heart.
This old Decretal, won from Kloss's hoards,
Thick-leaved, brass-cornered, ribbed with oaken
boards,

Stands the gray patriarch of the graver rows,
Its fourth ripe century narrowing to its close ;
Not daily conned, but glorious still to view,
With glistening letters wrought in red and blue.
There towers Stagira's all-embracing sage,
The Aldine anchor on his opening page ;
There sleep the births of Plato's heavenly mind,
In yon dark tomb by jealous clasps confined,
"Olim e libris" (dare I call it mine ?)
Of Yale's grave Head and Killingworth's divine !
In those square sheets the songs of Maro fill
The silvery types of smooth-leaved Baskerville ;
High over all, in close, compact array,
Their classic wealth the Elzevirs display.

In lower regions of the sacred space
 Range the dense volumes of a humbler race ;
 There grim surgeons all their mysteries teach,
 In spectral pictures, or in crabbed speech ;
 Harvey and Haller, fresh from Nature's page,
 Shoulder the dreamers of an earlier age,
 Lully and Geber, and the learned crew
 That loved to talk of all they could not do.
 Why count the rest,—those names of later days
 That many love, and all agree to praise,—
 Or point the titles, where a glance may read
 The dangerous lines of party or of creed ?
 Too well, perchance, the chosen list would show
 What few may care and none can claim to know.
 Each has his features, whose exterior seal
 A brush may copy, or a sunbeam steal ;
 Go to his study,—on the nearest shelf
 Stands the mosaic portrait of himself.

What though for months the tranquil dust
 descends,
 Whitening the heads of these mine ancient friends,
 While the damp offspring of the modern press
 Flaunts on my table with its pictured dress ;
 Not less I love each dull familiar face,
 Nor less should miss it from the appointed place ;
 I snatch the book, along whose burning leaves
 His scarlet web our wild romancer weaves,
 Yet, while proud Hester's fiery pangs I share,
 My old MAGNALIA must be standing *there* !



THE BELLS.

WHEN o'er the street the morning peal is flung
From yon tall belfry with the brazen tongue,
Its wide vibrations, wafted by the gale,
To each far listener tell a different tale.

The sexton, stooping to the quivering floor
Till the great caldron spills its brassy roar,
Whirls the hot axle, counting, one by one,
Each dull concussion, till his task is done.

Toil's patient daughter, when the welcome note
Clangs through the silence from the steeple's throat,
Streams, a white unit, to the checkered street,
Demure, but guessing whom she soon shall meet ;
The bell, responsive to her secret flame,
With every note repeats her lover's name.

The lover, tenant of the neighbouring lane,
Sighing, and fearing lest he sigh in vain,
Hears the stern accents, as they come and go,
Their only burden one despairing No !

Ocean's rough child, whom many a shore has
known

Ere homeward breezes swept him to his own,
Starts at the echo as it circles round,
A thousand memories kindling with the sound ;
The early favourite's unforgotten charms,
Whose blue initials stain his tawny arms ;
His first farewell, the flapping canvas spread,
The seaward streamers crackling overhead,
His kind, pale mother, not ashamed to weep
Her first-born's bridal with the haggard deep,
While the brave father stood with tearless eye,
Smiling and choking with his last good-bye.

'Tis but a wave, whose spreading circle beats,
With the same impulse, every nerve it meets,
Yet who shall count the varied shapes that ride
On the round surge of that aërial tide !

O child of earth ! If floating sounds like these
Steal from thyself their power to wound or please,
If here or there thy changing will inclines,
As the bright zodiac shifts its rolling signs,
Look at thy heart, and when its depths are known,
Then try thy brother's, judging by thine own,
But keep thy wisdom to the narrower range,
While its own standards are the sport of change ;
Nor count us rebels when we disobey
The passing breath that holds thy passion's sway.



NON-RESISTANCE.

PERHAPS too far in these considerate days
Has patience carried her submissive ways ;
Wisdom has taught us to be calm and meek,
To take one blow, and turn the other cheek ;
It is not written what a man shall do,
If the rude caitiff smite the other too !

Land of our fathers, in thine hour of need
God help thee, guarded by the passive creed !
As the lone pilgrim trusts to beads and cowl,
When through the forest rings the gray wolf's howl ;
As the deep galleon trusts her gilded prow
When the black corsair slants athwart her bow ;

As the poor pheasant, with his peaceful mien,
Trusts to his feathers, shining golden-green,
When the dark plumage with the crimson beak
Has rustled shadowy from its splintered peak,—
So trust thy friends, whose babbling tongues would
charm

The lifted sabre from thy foeman's arm,
Thy torches ready for the answering peal
From bellowing fort and thunder-freighted keel !



THE MORAL BULLY.

YON whey-faced brother, who delights to wear
A weedy flux of ill-conditioned hair,
Seems of the sort that in a crowded place
One elbows freely into smallest space ;
A timid creature, lax of knee and hip,
Whom small disturbance whitens round the lip ;
One of those harmless spectacled machines,
The Holy-Week of Protestants convenes ;
Whom school-boys question if their walk transcends
The last advices of maternal friends ;
Whom John, obedient to his master's sign,
Conducts, laborious, up to *ninety-nine*,
While Peter, glistening with luxurious scorn,
Husks his white ivories like an ear of corn ;
Dark in the brow and bilious in the cheek,
Whose yellowish linen flowers but once a week,
Conspicuous, annual, in their threadbare suits,
And the laced high-lows which they call their boots ;

Well mayst thou *shun* that dingy front severe,
But him, O stranger, him thou canst not *fear*!

Be slow to judge, and slower to despise,
Man of broad shoulders and heroic size !
The tiger, writhing from the boa's rings,
Drops at the fountain where the cobra stings.
In that lean phantom, whose extended glove
Points to the text of universal love,
Behold the master that can tame thee down
To crouch, the vassal of his Sunday frown ;
His velvet throat against thy corded wrist,
His loosened tongue against thy doubled fist !

The MORAL BULLY, though he never swears,
Nor kicks intruders down his entry stairs,
Though meekness plants his backward-sloping hat,
And non-resistance ties his white cravat,
Though his black broadcloth glories to be seen
In the same plight with Shylock's gaberdine,
Hugs the same passion to his narrow breast
That heaves the cuirass on the trooper's chest,
Hears the same hell-hounds yelling in his rear
That chase from port the maddened buccaneer,
Feels the same comfort while his acrid words
Turn the sweet milk of kindness into curds,
Or with grim logic prove, beyond debate,
That all we love is worthiest of our hate,
As the scarred ruffian of the pirate's deck,
When his long swivel rakes the staggering wreck !

Heaven keep us all ! Is every rascal clown
Whose arm is stronger free to knock us down !

Has every scarecrow, whose cachectic soul
Seems fresh from Bedlam, airing on parole,
Who, though he carries but a doubtful trace
Of angel visits on his hungry face,
From lack of marrow or the coins to pay,
Has dodged some vices in a shabby way,
The right to stick us with his cutthroat terms,
And bait his homilies with his brother worms?



THE MIND'S DIET.

No life worth naming ever comes to good
If always nourished on the selfsame food ;
The creeping mite may live so if he please,
And feed on Stilton till he turns to cheese,
But cool Magendie proves beyond a doubt,
If mammals try it, that their eyes drop out.

No reasoning natures find it safe to feed,
For their sole diet, on a single creed ;
It spoils their eyeballs while it spares their tongues,
And starves the heart to feed the noisy lungs.

When the first larvæ on the elm are seen,
The crawling wretches, like its leaves, are green ;
Ere chill October shakes the latest down,
They, like the foliage, change their tint to brown ;
On the blue flower a bluer flower you spy,
You stretch to pluck it—'tis a butterfly ;
The flattened tree-toads so resemble bark,
They're hard to find as Ethiops in the dark ;

The woodcock, stiffening to fictitious mud,
Cheats the young sportsman thirsting for his blood ;
So by long living on a single lie,
Nay, on one truth, will creatures get its dye
Red, yellow, green, they take their subject's hue,—
Except when squabbling turns them black and blue !



OUR LIMITATIONS.

WE trust and fear, we question and believe,
From life's dark threads a trembling faith to weave,
Frail as the web that misty night has spun,
Whose dew-gemmed awnings glitter in the sun.
While the calm centuries spell their lessons out,
Each truth we conquer spreads the realm of doubt ;
When Sinai's summit was Jehovah's throne,
The chosen Prophet knew His voice alone ;
When Pilate's hall that awful question heard,
The Heavenly Captive answered not a word.

Eternal Truth ! beyond our hopes and fears
Sweep the vast orbits of thy myriad spheres !
From age to age, while History carves sublime
On her waste rock the flaming curves of time,
How the wild swayings of our planet show
That worlds unseen surround the world we know.



THE OLD PLAYER.

THE curtain rose ; in thunders long and loud
The galleries rung ; the veteran actor bowed.
In flaming line the telltales of the stage
Showed on his brow the autograph of age ;
Pale, hueless waves amid his clustered hair,
And umbered shadows, prints of toil and care ;
Round the wide circle glanced his vacant eye,—
He strove to speak,—his voice was but a sigh.

Year after year had seen its short-lived race
Flit past the scenes and others take their place ;
Yet the old prompter watched his accents still,
His name still flaunted on the evening's bill.
Heroes, the monarchs of the scenic floor,
Had died in earnest and were heard no more ;
Beauties, whose cheeks such roseate bloom o'erspread
They faced the footlights in unborrowed red,
Had faded slowly through successive shades
To gray duennas, foils of younger maids ;
Sweet voices lost the melting tones that start
With Southern throbs the sturdy Saxon heart,
While fresh sopranos shook the painted sky
With their long, breathless, quivering locust-cry.
Yet there he stood,—the man of other days,
In the clear present's full, unsparing blaze,
As on the oak a faded leaf that clings
While a new April spreads its burnished wings.

How bright yon rows that soared in triple tier,
Their central sun the flashing chandelier ;

How dim the eye that sought with doubtful aim
Some friendly smile it still might dare to claim !
How fresh these hearts ! his own how worn and
cold !

Such the sad thoughts that long-drawn sigh had told,

No word yet faltered on his trembling tongue ;

Again, again, the crashing galleries rung.

As the old guardsman at the bugle's blast

Hears in its strain the echoes of the past ;

So, as the plaudits rolled and thundered round,

A life of memories startled at the sound.

He lived again,—the page of earliest days,—

Days of small fee and parsimonious praise ;

Then lithe young Romeo—hark that silvered tone,

From those smooth lips—alas ! they were his own.

Then the bronzed Moor, with all his love and woe,

Told his strange tale of midnight melting snow ;

And dark-plumed Hamlet, with his cloak and blade,

Looked on the royal ghost, himself a shade.

All in one flash, his youthful memories came,

Traced in bright hues of evanescent flame,

As the spent swimmer's in the lifelong dream,

While the last bubble rises through the stream.

Call him not old, whose visionary brain

Holds o'er the past its undivided reign.

For him in vain the envious seasons roll

Who bears eternal summer in his soul.

If yet the minstrel's song, the poet's lay,

Spring with her birds, or children at their play,

Or maiden's smile, or heavenly dream of art,

Stir the few life-drops creeping round his heart,

Turn to the record where his years are told,—
Count his gray hairs,—they cannot make him old !

What magic power has changed the faded mime?
One breath of memory on the dust of time.
As the last window in the buttressed wall
Of some gray minster tottering to its fall,
Though to the passing crowd its hues are spread,
A dull mosaic, yellow, green, and red,
Viewed from within, a radiant glory shows
When through its pictured screen the sunlight flows,
And kneeling pilgrims on its storied pane
See angels glow in every shapeless stain ;
So streamed the vision through his sunken eye
Clad in the splendours of his morning sky.

All the wild hopes his eager boyhood knew,
All the young fancies riper years proved true,
The sweet, low-whispered words, the winning
glance
From queens of song, from Houris of the dance,
Wealth's lavish gift, and Flattery's soothing phrase,
And Beauty's silence when her blush was praise,
And melting Pride, her lashes wet with tears,
Triumphs and banquets, wreaths and crowns and
cheers,
Pangs of wild joy that perish on the tongue,
And all that poets dream, but leave unsung !

In every heart some viewless founts are fed
From far-off hillsides where the dewes were shed ;
On the worn features of the weariest face
Some youthful memory leaves its hidden trace,
As in old gardens left by exiled kings
The marble basins tell of hidden springs,

But, gray with dust and overgrown with weeds,
 Their choking jets the passer little heeds,
 Till time's revenges break their seals away,
 And clad in rainbow light, the waters play.

Good night, fond dreamer ! let the curtain fall :
 The world's a stage, and we are players all.
 A strange rehearsal ! Kings without their crowns,
 And threadbare lords, and jewel-wearing clowns,
 Speak the vain words that mock their throbbing
 hearts,
 As Want, stern prompter ! spells them out their
 parts.
 The tinselled hero whom we praise and pay
 Is twice an actor in a twofold play.
 We smile at children when a painted screen
 Seems to their simple eyes a real scene ;
 Ask the poor hireling, who has left his throne
 To seek the cheerless home he calls his own,
 Which of his double lives most real seems,
 The world of solid facts or scenic dreams ?
 Canvas, or clouds,—the footlights, or the spheres,—
 The play of two short hours, or seventy years !

Dream on ! Though Heaven may woo our open
 eyes,
 Through their closed lids we look on fairer skies ;
 Truth is for other worlds, and hope for this ;
 The cheating future lends the present's bliss ;
 Life is a running shade, with fettered hands,
 That chases phantoms over shifting sands ;
 Death a still spectre on a marble seat,
 With ever clutching palms and shackled feet ;

The airy shapes that mock life's slender chain,
The flying joys he strives to clasp in vain,
Death only grasps ; to live is to pursue,—
Dream on ! there's nothing but illusion true !



THE ISLAND RUIN.

YE that have faced the billows and the spray
Of good St. Botolph's island-studded bay,
As from the gliding bark your eye has scanned
The beaconed rocks, the wave-girt hills of sand,
Have ye not marked one elm-o'ershadowed isle,
Round as the dimple chased in beauty's smile,—
A stain of verdure on an azure field,
Set like a jewel in a battered shield ?
Fixed in the narrow gorge of Ocean's path,
Peaceful he meets him in his hour of wrath ;
When the mailed Titan, scourged by hissing gales,
Writhes in his glistening coat of clashing scales !
The storm-beat island spreads its tranquil green,
Calm as an emerald on an angry queen.

So fair when distant should be fairer near ;
A boat shall waft us from the outstretched pier.
The breeze blows fresh ; we reach the island's edge,
Our shallop rustling through the yielding sedge.

No welcome greets us on the desert isle ;
Those elms, far-shadowing, hide no stately pile :
Yet these green ridges mark an ancient road ;
And lo ! the traces of a fair abode ;
The long gray line that marks a garden-wall,
And heaps of fallen beams, fire-branded all.

Who sees unmoved, a ruin at his feet,
 The lowliest home where human hearts have beat?
 Its hearthstone shaded with the bistre stain
 A century's showery torrents wash in vain;
 Its starving orchard, where the thistle blows
 And mossy trunks still mark the broken rows;
 Its chimney-loving poplar, oftenest seen
 Next an old roof, or where a roof has been;
 Its knot-grass, plantain,—all the social weeds,
 Man's mute companions, following where he
 leads;
 Its dwarfed, pale flowers, that show their straggling
 heads,
 Sown by the wind from grass-choked garden-beds;
 Its woodbine, creeping where it used to climb;
 Its roses, breathing of the olden time;
 All the poor shows the curious idler sees,
 As life's thin shadows waste by slow degrees,
 Till naught remains the saddening tale to tell,
 Save home's last wrecks,—the cellar and the well!

And whose the home that strews in black decay
 The one green-glowing island of the bay?
 Some dark-browed pirate's, jealous of the fate
 That seized the strangled wretch of "Nix's Mate?"
 Some forger's, skulking in a borrowed name,
 Whom Tyburn's dangling halter yet may claim?
 Some wan-eyed exile's, wealth and sorrow's heir,
 Who sought a lone retreat for tears and prayer?
 Some brooding poet's, sure of deathless fame,
 Had not his epic perished in the flame?
 Or some gray wooer's, whom a girlish frown
 Chased from his solid friends and sober town?

Or some plain tradesman's, fond of shade and ease,
Who sought them both beneath these quiet trees?
Why question mutes no question can unlock,
Dumb as the legend on the Dighton rock?
One thing at least these ruined heaps declare,—
They were a shelter once ; a man lived there.

But where the charred and crumbling records fail,
Some breathing lips may piece the half-told tale ;
No man may live with neighbours such as these,
Though girt with walls of rock and angry seas,
And shield his home, his children, or his wife,
His ways, his means, his vote, his creed, his life,
From the dread sovereignty of Ears and Eyes
And the small member that beneath them lies.

They told strange things of that mysterious man ;
Believe who will, deny them such as can ;
Why should we fret if every passing sail
Had its old seaman talking on the rail ?
The deep sunk schooner stuffed with Eastern lime,
Slow wedging on, as if the waves were slime ;
The knife-edged clipper with her ruffled spars,
The pawing steamer with her mane of stars,
The bull-browed galliot butting through the stream,
The wide-sailed yacht that slipped along her beam,
The deck-piled sloops, the pinched chebacco boats,
The frigate, black with thunder-freighted throats,
All had their talk about the lonely man ;
And thus, in varying phrase, the story ran.

His name had cost him little care to seek,
Plain, honest, brief, a decent name to speak,
Common, not vulgar, just the kind that slips
With least suggestion from a stranger's lips.

His birthplace England, as his speech might show,
 Or his hale cheek, that wore the red-streak's glow ;
 His mouth sharp-moulded ; in its mirth or scorn
 There came a flash as from the milky corn,
 When from the ear you rip the rustling sheath,
 And the white ridges show their even teeth.
 His stature moderate, but his strength confessed,
 In spite of broadcloth, by his ample breast ;
 Full-armed, thick-handed ; one that had been
 strong,
 And might be dangerous still, if things went wrong.
 He lived at ease beneath his elm-trees' shade,
 Did naught for gain, yet all his debts were paid ;
 Rich, so 'twas thought, but careful of his store ;
 Had all he needed, claimed to have no more.

But some that lingered round the isle at night
 Spoke of strange stealthy doings in their sight ;
 Of creeping lonely visits that he made
 To nooks and corners, with a torch and spade.
 Some said they saw the hollow of a cave ;
 One, given to fables, swore it was a grave ;
 Whereat some shuddered, others boldly cried,
 Those prowling boatmen lied, and knew they lied.
 They said his house was framed with curious cares,
 Lest some old friend might enter unawares ;
 That on the platform at his chamber's door
 Hinged a loose square that opened through the
 floor ;
 Touch the black silken tassel next the bell,
 Down, with a crash, the flapping trap-door fell ;
 Three stories deep the falling wretch would strike,
 To writhe at leisure on a boarder's pike.

By day armed always ; double-armed at night,
His tools lay round him, wake him such as might.
A carbine hung beside his India fan,
His hand could reach a Turkish ataghan ;
Pistols, with quaint-carved stocks and barrels gilt,
Crossed a long dagger with a jewelled hilt ;
A slashing cutlass stretched along the bed ;—
All this was what those lying boatmen said.

Then some were full of wondrous stories told
Of great oak chests and cupboards full of gold ;
Of the wedged ingots and the silver bars
That cost old pirates ugly sabre-scars ;
How his laced wallet often would disgorge
The fresh-faced guinea of an English George,
Or sweated ducat, palmed by Jews of yore,
Or double Joe, or Portuguese moidore,
And how his finger wore a rubied ring
Fit for the white-necked play-girl of a king.
But these fine legends, told with staring eyes,
Met with small credence from the old and wise.

Why tell each idle guess, each whisper vain?
Enough : the scorched and cindered beams remain.
He came, a silent pilgrim to the West,
Some old-world mystery throbbing in his breast ;
Close to the thronging mart he dwelt alone ;
He lived ; he died. The rest is all unknown.

Stranger, whose eyes the shadowy isle survey,
As the black steamer dashes through the bay,
Why ask his buried secret to divine?
He was thy brother ; speak, and tell us thine !

THE BANKER'S DINNER.

THE Banker's dinner is the stateliest feast
 The town has heard of for a year, at least ;
 The sparry lustres shed their broadest blaze,
 Damask and silver catch and spread the rays ;
 The florist's triumphs crown the daintier spoil
 Won from the sea, the forest, or the soil ;
 The steaming hot-house yields its largest pines,
 The sunless vaults unearth their oldest wines ;
 With one admiring look the scene survey,
 And turn a moment from the bright display.

Of all the joys of earthly pride or power,
 What gives most life, worth living, in an hour?
 When Victory settles on the doubtful fight,
 And the last foeman wheels in panting flight,
 No thrill like this is felt beneath the sun ;
 Life's sovereign moment is a battle won.
 But say what next? To shape a Senate's choice,
 By the strong magic of the master's voice ;
 To ride the stormy tempest of debate
 That whirls the wavering fortunes of the state.

Third in the list, the happy lover's prize
 Is won by honeyed words from women's eyes.
 If some would have it first instead of third,
 So let it be,—I answer not a word.

The fourth,—sweet readers, let the thoughtless
 half
 Have its small shrug and inoffensive laugh ;
 Let the grave quarter wear its virtuous frown,
 The stern half-quarter try to scowl us down ;

But the last eighth, the choice and sifted few,
Will hear my words, and, pleased, confess them
true.

Among the great whom Heaven has made to
shine,
How few have learned the art of arts,—to dine !
Nature, indulgent to our daily need,
Kind-hearted mother ! taught us all to feed ;
But the chief art,—how rarely Nature flings
This choicest gift among her social kings !
Say, man of truth, has life a brighter hour
Than waits the chosen guest who knows his power ?

He moves with ease, itself an angel charm,—
Lifts with light touch my lady's jewelled arm,
Slides to his seat, half leading and half led,
Smiling but quiet till the grace is said,
Then gently kindles, while by slow degrees
Creep softly out the little arts that please ;
Bright looks, the cheerful language of the eye,
The neat, crisp question and the gay reply,—
Talk light and airy, such as well may pass
Between the rested fork and lifted glass ;—
With play like this the earlier evening flies,
Till rustling silks proclaim the ladies rise.

His hour has come,—he looks along the chairs.
As the Great Duke surveyed his iron squares.
—That's the young traveller,—isn't much to show,—
Fast on the road, but at the table slow.
—Next him,—you see the author in his look,—
His forehead lined with wrinkles like a book,—
Wrote the great history of the ancient Huns,—
Holds back to fire among the heavy guns.

—Oh, there's our poet seated at his side,
 Beloved of ladies, soft, cerulean-eyed.
 Poets are prosy in their common talk,
 As the fast trotters, for the most part, walk.
 —And there's our well-dressed gentleman, who sits,
 By right divine, no doubt, among the wits,
 Who airs his tailor's patterns when he walks,
 The man that often speaks, but never talks.
 Why should he talk, whose presence lends a grace
 To every table where he shows his face?
 He knows the manual of the silver fork,
 Can name his claret—if he sees the cork,—
 Remark that "White top" was considered fine,
 But swear the "Juno" is the better wine;—
 Is not this talking? Ask Quintilian's rules;
 If they say No, the town has many fools.
 —Pause for a moment,—for our eyes behold
 The plain unsceptred king, the man of gold,
 The thrice illustrious threefold millionaire;
 Mark his slow-creeping, dead, metallic stare;
 His eyes, dull glimmering, like the balance-pan
 That weighs its guinea as he weighs his man.
 —Who's next? An artist, in a satin tie
 Whose ample folds defeat the curious eye.
 —And there's the cousin,—must be asked, you
 know,—
 Looks like a spinster at a baby-show.
 Hope he is cool,—they set him next the door,—
 And likes his place, between the gap and bore.
 —Next comes a Congress-man, distinguished guest!
 We don't count him,—they asked him with the rest;
 And then some white cravats, with well-shaped ties,
 And heads above them which their owners prize.

Of all that cluster round the genial board,
Not one so radiant as the banquet's lord ;
Some say they fancy, but they know not why,
A shade of trouble brooding in his eye ;
Nothing, perhaps—the rooms are overhot,—
Yet see his cheek,—the dull-red burning spot,—
Taste the brown sherry which he does not pass,—
Ha ! that is brandy ; see him fill his glass !

But not forgetful of his feasting friends,
To each in turn some lively word he sends ;
See how he throws his baited lines about,
And plays his men as anglers play their trout.

With the dry sticks all bonfires are begun ;
Bring the first faggot, proser number one !
A question drops among the listening crew
And hits the traveller, pat on Timbuctoo.
We're on the Niger, somewhere near its source,—
Not the least hurry, take the river's course
Through Kissi, Foota, Kankan, Bammakoo,
Bambarra, Sego, so to Timbuctoo,
Thence down to Youri ;—stop him if we can,
We can't fare worse,—wake up the Congress-man !
The Congress-man, once on his talking legs,
Stirs up his knowledge to its thickest dregs ;
Tremendous draught for dining men to quaff !
Nothing will choke him but a purpling laugh,
A word,—a shout,—a mighty roar,—'tis done ;
Extinguished ; lassoed by a treacherous pun.

A laugh is priming to the loaded soul ;
The scattering shots become a steady roll,
Broke by sharp cracks that run along the line,
The light artillery of the talker's wine.

The kindling goblets flame with golden dew,
 The hoarded flasks their tawny fire diffuse,
 And the Rhine's breast-milk gushes cold and bright,
 Pale as the moon and maddening as her light ;
 With crimson juice the thirsty southern sky
 Sucks from the hills where buried armies lie,
 So that the dreamy passion it imparts
 Is drawn from heroes' bones and lovers' hearts.

But lulls will come ; the flashing soul transmits
 Its gleams of light in alternating fits.
 The shower of talk that rattled down amain
 Ends in small patterings like an April's rain ;
 The voices halt ; the game is at a stand ;
 Now for a solo from the master-hand !

'Tis but a story,—quite a simple thing,—
 An *aria* touched upon a single string,
 But every accent comes with such a grace
 The stupid servants listen in their place,
 Each with his waiter in his lifted hands,
 Still as a well-bred pointer when he stands.
 A query checks him : " Is he quite exact ? "—
 (This from a grizzled, square-jawed man of fact.)
 The sparkling story leaves him to his fate,
 Crushed by a witness, smothered with a date,
 As a swift river, sown with many a star,
 Runs brighter, rippling on a shallow bar.
 The smooth divine suggests a graver doubt ;
 A neat quotation bowls the parson out ;
 Then, sliding gaily from his own display,
 He laughs the learned dulness all away.

So, with the merry tale and jovial song,
 The jocund evening whirls itself along,

Till the last chorus shrieks its loud *encore*,
And the white neckcloths vanish through the door.

One savage word!—The menials know its tone,
And slink away; the master stands alone.
“Well played, by —;” breathe not what were
 best unheard;
His goblet shivers while he speaks the word,—
“If wine tells truth,—and so have said the wise,—
It makes me laugh to think how brandy lies!
Bankrupt to-morrow,—millionaire to-day—
The farce is over,—now begins the play!”

The spring he touches lets a panel glide;
An iron closet lurks beneath the slide,
Bright with such treasures as a search might bring
From the deep pockets of a truant king.
Two diamonds, eyeballs of a god of bronze,
Bought from his faithful priest, a pious Bonze;
A string of brilliants; rubies, three or four;
Bags of old coin and bars of virgin ore;
A jewelled poniard and a Turkish knife,
Noiseless and useful if we come to strife.

Gone! as a pirate flies before the wind,
And not one tear for all he leaves behind!
From all the love his better years have known
Fled like a felon,—ah! but not alone!
The chariot flashes through a lantern's glare,—
Oh the wild eyes! the storm of sable hair!
Still to his side the broken heart will cling,—
The bride of shame, the wife without the ring:
Hark, the deep oath,—the wail of frenzied woe,—
Lost! lost to hope of Heaven and peace below!

He kept his secret ; but the seed of crime
 Burst of itself in God's appointed time.
 The lives he wrecked were scattered far and wide ;
 One never blamed nor wept,—she only died.
 None knew his lot, though idle tongues would say
 He sought a lonely refuge far away,
 And there, with borrowed name and altered mien,
 He died unheeded, as he lived unseen.
 The moral market had the usual chills
 Of Virtue suffering from protested bills ;
 'The White Cravats, to friendship's memory true,
 Sighed for the past, surveyed the future too ;
 'Their sorrow breathed in one expressive line,—
 "Gave pleasant dinners ; who has got his wine?"



THE MYSTERIOUS ILLNESS.

WHAT ailed young Lucius? Art had vainly tried
 To guess his ill, and found herself defied.
 The Augur plied his legendary skill ;
 Useless ; the fair young Roman languished still.
 His chariot took him every cloudless day
 Along the Pincian Hill or Appian Way ;
 They rubbed his wasted limbs with sulphurous oil,
 Oozed from the far-off Orient's heated soil ;
 They led him tottering down the steamy path
 Where bubbling fountains filled the thermal bath ;
 Borne in his litter to Egeria's cave,
 They washed him, shivering, in her icy wave.

They sought all curious herbs and costly stones,
They scraped the moss that grew on dead men's
bones,
They tried all cures the votive tablets taught,
Scoured every place whence healing drugs were
brought,
O'er Thracian hills his breathless couriers ran,
His slaves waylaid the Syrian caravan.

At last a servant heard a stranger speak
A new surgeon's name ; a clever Greek,
Skilled in his art ; from Pergamus he came
To Rome but lately ; GALEN was the name.
The Greek was called ; a man with piercing eyes,
Who must be cunning, and who might be wise.
He spoke but little,—if they pleased, he said,
He'd wait awhile beside the sufferer's bed.
So by his side he sat, serene and calm,
His very accents soft as healing balm ;
Not curious seemed, but every movement spied,
His sharp eyes searching where they seemed to
glide ;

Asked a few questions,—what he felt, and where ?

“ A pain just here,” “ A constant beating there.”

Who ordered bathing for his aches and ails ?

“ Charmis, the water-doctor from Marseilles.”

What was the last prescription in his case ?

“ A draught of wine with powdered chrysoprase.”

Had he no secret grief he nursed alone ?

A pause ; a little tremor ; answer,—“ None.”

Thoughtful, a moment, sat the cunning leech,
And muttered “ Eros ! ” in his native speech.

In the broad atrium various friends await
The last new utterance from the lips of fate ;

Men, matrons, maids, they talk the question o'er,
 And, restless, pace the tessellated floor.
 Not unobserved the youth so long had pined
 By gentle-hearted dames and damsels kind ;
 One with the rest, a rich Patrician's pride,
 The lady Hermia, called "the golden-eyed ;"
 The same the old Proconsul fain must woo,
 Whom, one dark night, a masked sicarius slew ;
 The same black Crassus over roughly pressed
 To hear his suit,—the Tiber knows the rest,
 (Crassus was missed next morning by his set ;
 Next week the fishers found him in their net.)
 She with the others paced the ample hall,
 Fairest, alas ! and saddest of them all.

At length the Greek declared, with puzzled face,
 Some strange enchantment mingled in the case,
 And naught would serve to act as counter-charm
 Save a warm bracelet from a maiden's arm.
 Not every maiden's,—many might be tried ;
 Which not in vain, experience must decide.
 Were there no damsels willing to attend
 And do such service for a suffering friend ?

The message passed among the waiting crowd,
 First in a whisper, then proclaimed aloud.
 Some wore no jewels ; some were disinclined,
 For reasons better guessed at than defined ;
 Though all were saints,—at least professed to be,—
 The list all counted, there were named but three.

The leech, still seated by the patient's side,
 Held his thin wrist, and watched him, eagle-eyed.

Aurelia first, a fair-haired Tuscan girl,
 Slipped off her golden asp, with eyes of pearl.

His solemn head the grave physician shook ;
The waxen features thanked her with a look.

Olympia next, a creature half divine,
Sprung from the blood of old Evander's line,
Held her white arm, that wore a twisted chain
Clasped with an opal-sheeny cymophane.
In vain, O daughter ! said the baffled Greek,
The patient sighed the thanks he could not speak.

Last, Hermia entered ; look, that sudden start !
The pallium heaves above his leaping heart ;
The beating pulse, the cheek's rekindled flame,
Those quivering lips, the secret all proclaim.
The deep disease long throbbing in the breast,
The dread enchantment, all at once confessed !
The case was plain ; the treatment was begun ;
And Love soon cured the mischief he had done.

Young Love, too oft thy treacherous bandage
 slips
Down from the eyes it blinded to the lips !
Ask not the Gods, O youth, for clearer sight,
But the bold heart to plead thy cause aright.
And thou, fair maiden, when thy lovers sigh,
Suspect thy flattering ear, but trust thine eye ;
And learn this secret from the tale of old :
No love so true as love that dies untold.



A MOTHER'S SECRET.

How sweet the sacred legend—if unblamed
In my slight verse such holy things are named—
Of Mary's secret hours of hidden joy,
Silent, but pondering on her wondrous Boy !

Ave, Maria ! Pardon, if I wrong
Those heavenly words that shame my earthly song !

The choral host had closed the Angel's strain
Sung to the listening watch on Bethlehem's plain,
And now the shepherds, hastening on their way,
Sought the still hamlet where the Infant lay.
They passed the fields that gleaning Ruth toiled
o'er,—

They saw afar the ruined threshing-floor
Where Moab's daughter, homeless and forlorn,
Found Boaz slumbering by his heaps of corn ;
And some remembered how the holy scribe,
Skilled in the lore of every jealous tribe,
Traced the warm blood of Jesse's royal son
To that fair alien, bravely wooed and won.
So fared they on to seek the promised sign,
That marked the anointed heir of David's line.

At last, by forms of earthly semblance led,
They found the crowded inn, the oxen's shed.
No pomp was there, no glory shone around
On the coarse straw that strewed the reeking
ground ;

One dim retreat a flickering torch betrayed,—
In that poor cell the Lord of Life was laid !

The wondering shepherds told their breathless
tale

Of the bright choir that woke the sleeping vale ;
Told how the skies with sudden glory flamed,
Told how the shining multitude proclaimed,
" Joy, joy to earth ! Behold the hallowed morn !
In David's city Christ the Lord is born !
' Glory to God ! ' let angels shout on high,
' Good-will to men ! ' the listening earth reply ! "

They spoke with hurried words and accents
wild ;
Calm in His cradle slept the heavenly Child.
No trembling word the mother's joy revealed,—
One sigh of rapture, and her lips were sealed ;
Unmoved she saw the rustic train depart,
But kept their words to ponder in her heart.

Twelve years had passed ; the Boy was fair and
tall,
Growing in wisdom, finding grace with all.
The maids of Nazareth, as they trooped to fill
Their balanced urns beside the mountain rill,
The gathered matrons, as they sat and spun,
Spoke in soft words of Joseph's quiet Son.
No voice had reached the Galilean vale
Of star-led kings, or awe-struck shepherds' tale ;
In the meek, studious Child they only saw
The future Rabbi, learned in Israel's law.

So grew the Boy, and now the feast was near
When at the Holy Place the tribes appear.
Scarce had the home-bred Child of Nazareth seen
Beyond the hills that girt the village green ;
Save when at midnight, o'er the starlight sands,
Snatched from the steel of Herod's murdering bands,
A Babe, close folded to His mother's breast,
Through Edom's wilds He sought the sheltering
West.

Then Joseph spake: "Thy Boy hath largely
grown ;
Weave Him fine raiment, fitting to be shown ;
Fair robes beseeem the pilgrim, as the priest :
Goes He not with us to the holy feast?"

And Mary culled the flaxen fibres white;
Till eve she spun ; she spun till morning light.
The thread was twined ; its parting meshes through
From hand to hand her restless shuttle flew,
Till the full web was wound upon the beam ;
Love's curious toil,—a vest without a seam !

'They reach the Holy Place, fulfil the days
To solemn feasting given, and grateful praise.
At last they turn, and far Moriah's height
Melts in the southern sky and fades from sight.
All day the dusky caravan has flowed
In devious trails along the winding road ;
(For many a step their homeward path attends,
And all the sons of Abraham are as friends.)
Evening has come,—the hour of rest and joy,—
Hush ! hush ! That whisper,—“Where is Mary's
Boy ? ”

Oh weary hour ! oh aching days that passed
Filled with strange fears each wilder than the last,—
The soldier's lance, the fierce centurion's sword,
The crushing wheels that whirl some Roman lord,
The midnight crypt that sucks the captive's breath,
The blistering sun on Hinnom's vale of death !

Thrice on His cheek had rained the morning
light ;
Thrice on His lips the mildewed kiss of night,
Crouched by a sheltering column's shining plinth,
Or stretched beneath the odorous terebinth.
At last, in desperate mood, they sought once more
The Temple's porches, searched in vain before ;
They found Him seated with the ancient men,—
The grim old rufflers of the tongue and pen,—

Their bald heads glistening as they clustered near,
Their gray beards slanting as they turned to hear,
Lost in half-envious wonder and surprise
That lips so fresh should utter words so wise.

And Mary said,—as one who, tried too long,
Tells all her grief and half her sense of wrong,—
“What is this thoughtless thing which Thou hast
done?

Lo, we have sought Thee sorrowing, O my son ! ”

Few words He spake, and scarce of filial tone,
Strange words, their sense a mystery yet unknown ;
Then turned with them and left the holy hill,
To all their mild commands obedient still.

The tale was told to Nazareth's sober men,
And Nazareth's matrons told it oft again ;
The maids retold it at the fountain's side,
The youthful shepherds doubted or denied ;
It passed around among the listening friends,
With all that fancy adds and fiction lends,
Till newer marvels dimmed the young renown
Of Joseph's Son, who talked the Rabbis down.

But Mary, faithful to its lightest word,
Kept in her heart the sayings she had heard,
Till the dread morning rent the Temple's veil,
And shuddering earth confirmed the wondrous tale.

Youth fades ; love droops ; the leaves of friendship
fall :

A mother's secret hope outlives them all.

THE DISAPPOINTED STATESMAN.

WHO of all statesmen is his country's pride,
Her councils' prompter and her leaders' guide?
He speaks ; the nation holds its breath to hear ;
He nods, and shakes the sunset hemisphere.
Born where the primal fount of Nature springs
By the rude cradles of her throneless kings,
In his proud eye her royal signet flames,
By his own lips her Monarch she proclaims.

Why name his countless triumphs, whom to meet
Is to be famous, envied in defeat ?
The keen debaters, trained to brawls and strife,
Who fire one shot, and finish with the knife,
Tried him but once, and, cowering in their shame,
Ground their hacked blades to strike at meaner game.
The lordly chief, his party's central stay,
Whose lightest word a hundred votes obey,
Found a new listener seated at his side,
Looked in his eye, and felt himself defied,
Flung his rash gauntlet on the startled floor,
Met the all-conquering, fought—and ruled no more.

See where he moves, what eager crowds attend !
What shouts of thronging multitudes ascend !
If this is life,—to mark with every hour
The purple deepening in his robes of power,
To see the painted fruits of honour fall
Thick at his feet, and choose among them all,
To hear the sounds that shape his spreading name
Peal through the myriad organ-stops of fame,
Stamp the lone isle that spots the seaman's chart,
And crown the pillared glory of the mart,

To count as peers the few supremely wise
Who mark their planet in the angels' eyes,—
If this is life—

What savage man is he
Who strides along beside the sounding sea?
Alone he wanders by the murmuring shore,
His thoughts as restless as the waves that roar;
Looks on the sullen sky as stormy-browed
As on the waves yon tempest-brooding cloud,
Heaves from his aching breast a wailing sigh,
Sad as the gust that sweeps the clouded sky.
Ask him his griefs; what midnight demons plough
The lines of torture on his lofty brow;
Unlock those marble lips, and bid them speak
The mystery freezing in his bloodless cheek.

His secret? hid beneath a flimsy word;
One foolish whisper that ambition heard;
And thus it spake: "Behold yon gilded chair,
The world's one vacant throne,—thy place is there!"

Ah, fatal dream! what warning spectres meet
In ghastly circle round its shadowy seat!
Yet still the Tempter murmurs in his ear
The maddening taunt he cannot choose but hear:
"Meanest of slaves, by gods and men accurst,
He who is second when he might be first!
Climb with bold front the ladder's topmost round,
Or chain thy creeping footsteps to the ground!"

Illustrious Dupe! have those majestic eyes
Lost their proud fire for such a vulgar prize?
Art thou the last of all mankind to know
That party-fights are won by aiming low?
Thou, stamped by Nature with her royal sign,
That party-hirelings hate a look like thine?

Shake from thy sense the wild delusive dream !
Without the purple, art thou not supreme ?
And soothed by love unbought, thy heart shall own
A nation's homage nobier than its throne !



THE SECRET OF THE STARS.

Is man's the only throbbing heart that hides
The silent spring that feeds its whispering tides ?
Speak from thy caverns, mystery-breeding Earth,
Tell the half-hinted story of thy birth,
And calm the noisy champions who have thrown
The book of types against the book of stone !

Have ye not secrets, ye refulgent spheres,
No sleepless listener of the starlight hears ?
In vain the sweeping equatorial pries
Through every world-sown corner of the skies,
To the far orb that so remotely strays
Our midnight darkness is its noonday blaze ;
In vain the climbing soul of creeping man
Metes out the heavenly concave with a span,
Tracks into space the long-lost meteor's trail,
And weighs an unseen planet in the scale ;
Still o'er their doubts the wan-eyed watchers sigh,
And Science lifts her still unanswered cry :
" Are all these worlds, that speed their circling flight
Dumb, vacant, soulless, —baubles of the night ?
Warmed with God's smile and wafted by His breath,
To weave in ceaseless round the dance of Death ?
Or rolls a sphere in each expanding zone,
Crowned with a life as varied as our own ? "

Maker of earth and stars ! If Thou hast taught
By what Thy voice hath spoke, Thy hand hath
wrought,

By all that Science proves, or guesses true,
More than Thy Poet dreamed, Thy prophet knew,—
The heavens still bow in darkness at Thy feet,
And shadows veil Thy cloud-pavilioned seat !

Not for ourselves we ask Thee to reveal
One awful word beneath the future's seal ;
What Thou shalt tell us, grant us strength to
bear :

What Thou withholdest is Thy single care.
Not for ourselves ; the present clings too fast,
Moored to the mighty anchors of the past ;
But when, with angry snap, some cable parts,
The sound re-echoing in our startled hearts,—
When through the wall that clasps the harbour
round,

And shuts the raving ocean from its bound,
Shattered and rent by sacrilegious hands,
The first mad billow leaps upon the sands,—
Then to the Future's awful page we turn,
And what we question hardly dare to learn.

Still let us hope ! for while we seem to tread
The time-worn pathway of the nations dead,
Though Sparta laughs at all our warlike deeds,
And buried Athens claims our stolen creeds,
Though Rome, a spectre on her broken throne,
Beholds our eagle and recalls her own,
Though England fling her pennons on the breeze
And reign before us Mistress of the seas,—
While calm-eyed History tracks us circling round
Fate's iron pillar where they all were bound,

She sees new beacons crowned with brighter
flame

Than the old watch-fires, like, but not the same !

Still in our path a larger curve she finds,

The spiral widening as the chain unwinds !

No shameless haste shall spot with bandit-crime

Our destined empire snatched before its time.

Wait,—wait, undoubting, for the winds have
caught

From our bold speech the heritage of thought ;

No marble form that sculptured truth can wear

Vies with the image shaped in viewless air ;

And thought unfettered grows through speech to
deeds,

As the broad forest marches in its seeds.

What though we perish ere the day is won ?

Enough to see its glorious work begun !

The thistle falls before a trampling clown,

But who can chain the flying thistle-down ?

Wait while the fiery seeds of freedom fly,

The prairie blazes when the grass is dry !

What arms might ravish, leave to peaceful arts,

Wisdom and love shall win the roughest hearts ;

So shall the angel who has closed for man

The blissful garden since his woes began

Swing wide the golden portals of the West,

And Eden's secret stand at length confessed !

A POEM.

DEDICATION OF THE PITTSFIELD CEMETERY,
SEPTEMBER 9, 1850.

ANGEL of Death ! extend thy silent reign !
Stretch thy dark sceptre o'er this new domain !
No sable car along the winding road
Has borne to earth its unresisting load ;
No sudden mound has risen yet to show
Where the pale slumberer folds his arms below ;
No marble gleams to bid his memory live
In the brief lines that hurrying Time can give ;
Yet, O Destroyer ! from thy shrouded throne
Look on our gift ; this realm is all thine own !

Fair is the scene ; its sweetness oft beguiled
From their dim paths the children of the wild ;
The dark-haired maiden loved its grassy dells,
The feathered warrior claimed its wooded swells,
Still on its slopes the ploughman's ridges show
The pointed flints that left his fatal bow,
Chipped with rough art and slow barbarian toil,—
Last of his wrecks that strew the alien soil !

Here spread the fields that heaped their ripened
store
Till the brown arms of Labour held no more ;
The scythe's broad meadow with its dusky blush ;
The sickle's harvest with its velvet flush ;
The green-haired maize, her silken tresses laid,
In soft luxuriance, on her harsh brocade ;
The gourd that swells beneath her tossing plume ;
The coarser wheat that rolls in lakes of bloom,—

Its coral stems and milk-white flowers alive
With the wide murmurs of the scattered hive ;
Here glowed the apple with the pencilled streak
Of morning painted on its southern cheek ;
The pear's long necklace strung with golden drops,
Arched, like the banian, o'er its pillared props ;
Here crept the growths that paid the labourer's
care

With the cheap luxuries wealth consents to spare ;
Here sprang the healing herbs which could not save
The hand that reared them from the neighbouring
grave.

Yet all its varied charms, for ever free
From task and tribute, Labour yields to thee :
No more, when April sheds her fitful rain,
The sower's hand shall cast its flying grain ;
No more, when Autumn strews the flaming leaves,
The reaper's band shall gird its yellow sheaves ;
For thee alike the circling seasons flow
Till the first blossoms heave the latest snow.
In the stiff clod below the whirling drifts,
In the loose soil the springing herbage lifts,
In the hot dust beneath the parching weeds,
Life's withering flower shall drop its shrivelled
seeds ;

Its germ entranced in thy unbreathing sleep
Till what thou sowest mightier angels reap !
Spirit of Beauty ! let thy graces blend
With loveliest Nature all that Art can lend.
Come from the bowers where Summer's life-blood
flows

Through the red lips of June's half-open rose,

Dressed in bright hues, the loving sunshine's
dower;

For tranquil Nature owns no mourning flower.

Come from the forest where the beech's screen
Bars the fierce noonbeam with its flakes of green ;
Stay the rude axe that bares the shadowy plains,
Stanch the deep wound that dries the maple's
veins.

Come with the stream whose silver-braided rills
Fling their unclasping bracelets from the hills,
Till in one gleam, beneath the forest's wings,
Melts the white glitter of a hundred springs.

Come from the steeps where look majestic forth
From their twin thrones the Giants of the North
On the huge shapes, that, crouching at their knees,
Stretch their broad shoulders, rough with shaggy
trees.

Through the wide waste of ether, not in vain,
Their softened gaze shall reach our distant plain ;
There, while the mourner turns his aching eyes
On the blue mounds that print the bluer skies,
Nature shall whisper that the fading view
Of mightiest grief may wear a heavenly hue.

Cherub of Wisdom ! let thy marble page
Leave its sad lesson, new to every age ;
Teach us to live, not grudging every breath
To the chill winds that waft us on to death,
But ruling calmly every pulse it warms,
And tempering gently every word it forms.
Seraph of Love ! in heaven's adoring zone,
Nearest of all around the central throne,

While with soft hands the pillowed turf we spread
That soon shall hold us in its dreamless bed,
With the low whisper,—Who shall first be laid
In the dark chamber's yet unbroken shade?—
Let thy sweet radiance shine rekindled here,
And all we cherish grow more truly dear.
Here in the gates of Death's o'erchanging vault,
Oh, teach us kindness for our brother's fault ;
Lay all our wrongs beneath this peaceful sod,
And lead our hearts to Mercy and its God.

FATHER of all ! in Death's relentless claim
We read Thy mercy by its sterner name ;
In the bright flower that decks the solemn bier,
We see Thy glory in its narrowed sphere ;
In the deep lessons that affliction draws,
We trace the curves of Thy encircling laws ;
In the long sigh that sets our spirits free,
We own the love that calls us back to Thee !
Through the hushed street, along the silent plain,
The spectral future leads its mourning train,
Dark with the shadows of uncounted bands,
Where man's white lips and woman's wringing hands
Track the still burden, rolling slow before,
That love and kindness can protect no more ;
The smiling babe that, called to mortal strife,
Shuts its meek eyes and drops its little life ;
The drooping child who prays in vain to live,
And pleads for help its parent cannot give ;
The pride of beauty stricken in its flower ;
The strength of manhood broken in an hour ;
Age in its weakness, bowed by toil and care,
Traced in sad lines beneath its silvered hair.

The sun shall set, and heaven's resplendent spheres
Gild the smooth turf unhallowed yet by tears,
But ah ! how soon the evening stars will shed
Their sleepless light around the slumbering dead !

Take them, O Father, in immortal trust !
Ashes to ashes, dust to kindred dust,
Till the last angel rolls the stone away,
And a new morning brings eternal day !



TO GOVERNOR SWAIN.

DEAR GOVERNOR, if my skiff might brave
The winds that lift the ocean wave,
The mountain stream that loops and swerves
Through my broad meadow's channelled curves
Should waft me on from bound to bound
To where the River weds the Sound,
The Sound should give me to the Sea,
That to the Bay, the Bay to thee.

It may not be ; too long the track
To follow down or struggle back.
The sun has set on fair Naushon
Long ere my western blaze is gone ;
The ocean disc is rolliug dark
In shadows round your swinging bark,
While yet the yellow sunset fills
The stream that scarfs my spruce-clad hills ;

The day-star wakes your island deer
Long ere my barnyard chanticleer ;
Your mists are soaring in the blue
While mine are sparks of glittering dew.
It may not be ; oh would it might,
Could I live o'er that glowing night !
What golden hours would come to life,
What goodly feats of peaceful strife,—
Such jests, that, drained of every joke,
The very bank of language broke,—
Such deeds, that Laughter nearly died
With stitches in his belted side ;
While Time, caught fast in pleasure's chain,
His double goblet snapped in twain,
And stood with half in either hand,—
Both brimming full,—but not of sand !

It may not be ; I strive in vain
To break my slender household chain,—
Three pairs of little clasping hands,
One voice, that whispers, not commands.
Even while my spirit flies away,
My gentle jailers murmur nay ;
All shapes of elemental wrath
They raise along my threatened path ;
The storm grows black, the waters rise,
The mountains mingle with the skies,
The mad tornado scoops the ground,
The midnight robber prowls around,—
Thus, kissing every limb they tie,
They draw a knot and heave a sigh,
Till, fairly netted in the toil,
My feet are rooted to the soil,

Only the soaring wish is free !—
And that, dear Governor, flies to thee !

Pittsfield, 1851.



TO AN ENGLISH FRIEND.

THE seed that wasteful autumn cast
To waver on its stormy blast,
Long o'er the wintry desert tost,
Its living germ has never lost.
Dropped by the weary tempest's wing,
It feels the kindling ray of spring,
And starting from its dream of death,
Pours on the air its perfumed breath.

So, parted by the rolling flood,
The love that springs from common blood
Needs but a single sunlit hour
Of mingling smiles to bud and flower ;
Unharm'd its slumbering life has flown,
From shore to shore, from zone to zone,
Where summer's falling roses stain
The tepid waves of Pontchartrain,
Or where the lichen creeps below
Katahdin's wreaths of whirling snow,

Though fiery sun and stiffening cold
May change the fair ancestral mould,
No winter chills, no summer drains
The life-blood drawn from English veins,

Still bearing wheresoe'er it flows
The love that with its fountain rose,
Unchanged by space, unwronged by time,
From age to age, from clime to clime !

1852.



POEMS

FROM THE
*AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST
TABLE.—1857-1858.*



THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS.

THIS is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main,—
The venturous bark, that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming
hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl ;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl !
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed,—
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed !

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil ;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old
no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by
thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, forlorn !
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn !
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice
that sings :—
Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll !
Leave thy low-vaulted past !
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting
sea !



SUN AND SHADOW.

As I look from the isle, o'er its billows of green,
To the billows of foam-crested blue,
Yon bark, that afar in the distance is seen,
Half dreaming, my eyes will pursue :

Now dark in the shadow, she scatters the spray
As the chaff in the stroke of the flail ;
Now white as the sea-gull, she flies on her way,
The sun gleaming bright on her sail.

Yet her pilot is thinking of dangers to shun,—
Of breakers that whiten and roar ;
How little he cares, if in shadow or sun
They see him who gaze from the shore !
He looks to the beacon that looms from the reef,
To the rock that is under his lee,
As he drifts on the blast, like a wind-wafted leaf,
O'er the gulfs of the desolate sea.

Thus drifting afar to the dim-vaulted caves
Where life and its ventures are laid,
The dreamers who gaze while we battle the waves
May see us in sunshine or shade ;
Yet true to our course, though the shadows grow
dark,
We'll trim our broad sail as before,
And stand by the rudder that governs the bark,
Nor ask how we look from the shore !



THE TWO ARMIES.

As Life's unending column pours,
Two marshalled hosts are seen,—
Two armies on the trampled shores
That Death flows black between.

One marches to the drum-beat's roll,
The wide-mouthed clarion's bray,
And bears upon a crimson scroll,
"Our glory is to slay."

One moves in silence by the stream,
With sad, yet watchful eyes,
Calm as the patient planet's gleam
That walks the clouded skies.

Along its front no sabres shine,
No blood-red pennons wave ;
Its banner bears the single line,
"Our duty is to save."

For those no death-bed's slinging shade ;
At Honour's trumpet-call,
With knitted brow and lifted blade
In Glory's arms they fall.

For these no clashing falchions bright,
No stirring battle-cry ;
The bloodless stabber calls by night,—
Each answers, "Here am I !"

For those the sculptor's laurelled bust,
The builder's marble piles,
The anthems pealing o'er their dust
Through long cathedral aisles.

For these the blossom-sprinkled turf
That floods the lonely graves
When Spring rolls in her sea-green surf
In flowery-foaming waves.

Two paths lead upward from below,
And angels wait above,
Who count each burning life-drop's flow,
Each falling tear of Love.

Though from the Hero's bleeding breast
Her pulses Freedom drew,
Though the white lilies in her crest
Sprang from that scarlet dew,—

While Valour's haughty champions wait
Till all their scars are shown,
Love walks unchallenged through the gate,
To sit beside the Throne !



MUSA.

OH my lost beauty !—hast thou folded quite
Thy wings of morning light
Beyond those iron gates
Where Life crowds hurrying to the haggard
Fates,
And Age upon his mound of ashes waits
To chill our fiery dreams,
Hot from the heart of youth plunged in his icy
streams ?

Leave me not fading in these weeds of care,
Whose flowers are silvered hair !
Have I not loved thee long,
Though my young lips have often done thee wrong,
And vexed thy heaven-tuned ear with careless song ?

Ah, wilt thou yet return,
Bearing thy rose-hued torch, and bid thine altar burn?

Come to me !—I will flood thy silent shrine
With my soul's sacred wine,
And heap thy marble floors
As the wild spice-trees waste their fragrant stores,
In leafy islands walled with madrepores
And lapped in Orient seas,
When all their feathery palms toss, plume-like, in the
breeze.

Come to me !—thou shalt feed on honeyed words,
Sweeter than song of birds ;—
No wailing bulbul's throat,
No melting dulcimer's melodious note
When o'er the midnight wave its murmurs float,
Thy ravished sense might soothe
With flow so liquid-soft, with strain so velvet-smooth.

Thou shalt be decked with jewels, like a queen,
Sought in those bowers of green
Where loop the clustered vines
And the close clinging *dulcamara*¹ twines,—
Pure pearls of Maydew where the moonlight shines,
And Summer's fruited gems,
And coral pendants shorn from Autumn's berried
stems.

Sit by me drifting on the sleepy waves,—
Or stretched by grass-grown graves,

¹ The "bitter-sweet" of New England is the *Celastrus scandens*,—"Bourreau des arbres" of the Canadian French.

Whose gray, high-shouldered stones,
Carved with old names Life's time-worn roll dis-
owns,
Lean, lichen-spotted, o'er the crumbled bones
Still slumbering where they lay
While the sad pilgrim watched to scare the wolf
away.

Spread o'er my couch thy visionary wing !
Still let me dream and sing,—
Dream of that winding shore
Where scarlet cardinals bloom—for me no more,—
The stream with heaven beneath its liquid floor,
And clustering *nenuphars*
Sprinkling its mirrored blue like golden-chaliced
stars !

Come while their balms the linden-blossoms shed !—
Come while the rose is red,—
While blue-eyed Summer smiles
On the green ripples round yon sunken piles
Washed by the moon-wave warm from Indian isles,
And on the sultry air
The chestnuts spread their palms like holy men in
prayer !

Oh for thy burning lips to fire my brain
With thrills of wild, sweet pain !—
On life's autumnal blast,
Like shrivelled leaves, youth's passion-flowers are
cast,—
Once loving thee, we love thee to the last !—

Behold thy new-decked shrine,
And hear once more the voice that breathed "For
ever thine!"

*A PARTING HEALTH.*

TO J. L. MOTLEY.

YES, we knew we must lose him, - though friendship
may claim
To blend her green leaves with the laurels of fame ;
Though fondly, at parting, we call him our own,
'Tis the whisper of love when the bugle has blown.

As the rider that rests with the spur on his heel,
As the guardsman that sleeps in his corslet of
s'eel,
As the archer that stands with his shaft on the
string,
He stoops from his toil to the garland we bring.

What pictures yet slumber unborn in his loom,
Till their warriors shall breathe and their beauties
shall bloom,
While the tapestry lengthens the life-glowing dyes
That caught from our sunsets the stain of their
skies !

In the alcoves of death, in the charnels of time,
Where flit the gaunt spectres of passion and crime,
There are triumphs untold, there are martyrs
unsung,
There are heroes yet silent to speak with his tongue !

Let us hear the proud story which time has be-
queathed !

From lips that are warm with the freedom they
breathed !

Let him summon its tyrants, and tell us their
doom,

Though he sweep the black past like Van Tromp
with his broom !

The dream flashes by, for the west-winds awake
On pampas, on prairie, o'er mountain and lake,
To bathe the swift bark, like a sea-girdled shrine,
With incense they stole from the rose and the pine.

So fill a bright cup with the sunlight that gushed
When the dead summer's jewels were trampled and
crushed :

THE TRUE KNIGHT OF LEARNING,—the world
holds him dear,—

Love bless him, Joy crown him, God speed his
career !

1857.



WHAT WE ALL THINK.

THAT age was older once than now,
In spite of locks untimely shed,
Or silvered on the youthful brow ;
That babes make love and children wed.

That sunshine had a heavenly glow,
Which faded with those "good old days"

When winters came with deeper snow,
And autumns with a softer haze.

That—mother, sister, wife, or child—
The “best of women” each has known.
Were school-boys ever half so wild?
How young the grandpapas have grown!

That *but for this* our souls were free,
And *but for that* our lives were blest;
That in some season yet to be
Our cares will leave us time to rest.

Whene’er we groan with ache or pain,—
Some common ailment of the race,—
Though doctors think the matter plain,—
That ours is “a peculiar case.”

That when like babes with fingers burned
We count one bitter maxim more,
Our lesson all the world has learned,
And men are wiser than before.

That when we sob o’er fancied woes,
The angels hovering overhead
Count every pitying drop that flows,
And love us for the tears we shed.

That when we stand with tearless eye
And turn the beggar from our door,
They still approve us when we sigh,
“Ah, had I but *one thousand more!*”

Though temples crowd the crumbled brink
O'erhanging truth's eternal flow,
Their tablets bold with *what we think*,
Their echoes dumb to *what we know*;

That one unquestioned text we read,
All doubt beyond, all fear above,
Nor crackling pile nor cursing creed
Can burn or blot it : GOD IS LOVE !



SPRING HAS COME.

INTRA MUROS.

THE sunbeams, lost for half a year,
Slant through my pane their morning rays ;
For dry northwesterners cold and clear,
The east blows in its thin blue haze.

And first the snowdrop's bells are seen,
Then close against the sheltering wall
The tulip's horn of dusky green,
The peony's dark unfolding ball.

The golden-chaliced crocus burns ;
The long narcissus-blades appear ;
The cone-beaked hyacinth returns
To light her blue-flamed chandelier.

The willow's whistling lashes, wrung—
By the wild winds of gusty March,
With shallow leaflets lightly strung,
Are swaying by the tufted larch.

The elms have robed their slender spray
With full-blown flower and embryo leaf ;
Wide o'er the clasping arch of day
Soars like a cloud their hoary chief.

See the proud tulip's flaunting cup,
That flames in glory for an hour,—
Behold it withering,—then look up,—
How meek the forest monarch's flower !

When wake the violets, Winter dies ;
When sprout the elm-buds, Spring is near ;
When lilacs blossom, Summer cries,
“ Bud, little roses ! Spring is here ! ”

The windows blush with fresh bouquets,
Cut with the May-dew on their lips ;
The radish all its bloom displays,
Pink as Aurora's finger-tips.

Nor less the flood of light that showers
On beauty's changed corolla-shades,—
The walks are gay as bridal bowers
With rows of many-petalled maids.

The scarlet shell-fish click and clash
In the blue barrow where they slide ;
The horseman, proud of streak and splash,
Creeps homeward from his morning ride.

Here comes the dealer's awkward string,
With neck in rope and tail in knot,—
Rough colts, with careless country-swing,
In lazy walk or slouching trot.

Wild filly from the mountain-side,
 Doomed to the close and chafing thills,
 Lend me thy long, untiring stride
 To seek with thee thy western hills!

I hear the whispering voice of Spring,
 The thrush's trill, the robin's cry,
 Like some poor bird with prisoned wing
 That sits and sings, but longs to fly.

Oh for one spot of living green,—
 One little spot where leaves can grow,—
 To love unblamed, to walk unseen,
 To dream above, to sleep below !



PROLOGUE.

A PROLOGUE? Well, of course the ladies know ;—
 I have my doubts. No matter,—here we go !
 What is a Prologue? Let our Tutor teach :
Pro means beforehand ; *logos* stands for speech.
 'Tis like the harper's prelude on the strings,
 The prima donna's courtesy ere she sings :—
 Prologues in metre are to other *pros*
 As worsted stockings are to engine-hose.
 "The world's a stage,"—as Shakespeare said, one
 day ;
 The stage a world—was what he meant to say.
 The outside world's a blunder, that is clear ;
 The real world that Nature meant is here.

Here every foundling finds its lost mamma ;
 Each rogue, repentant, melts his stern papa ;
 Misers relent, the spendthrift's debts are paid,
 The cheats are taken in the traps they laid ;
 One after one the troubles all are past
 Till the fifth act comes right side up at last,
 When the young couple, old folks, rogues, and all,
 Join hands, *so* happy at the curtain's fall.
 Here suffering virtue ever finds relief,
 And black-browed ruffians always come to grief.
 When the lorn damsel, with a frantic screech,
 And cheeks as hueless as a brandy-peach,
 Cries, "Help, kyind Heaven !" and drops upon her
 knees

On the green—baize,—beneath the (canvas) trees,—
 See to her side avenging Valour fly :—
 "Ha ! Villain ! Draw ! Now, Terraitorr, yield or
 die !"

When the poor hero flounders in despair,
 Some dear lost uncle turns up millionaire,
 Clasps the young scapegrace with paternal joy,
 Sobs on his neck, "*My boy ! MY BOY !! MY*
 BOY !!!"

Ours, then, sweet friends, the real world to-night,
 Of love that conquers in disaster's spite.
 Ladies, attend ! while woful cares and doubt
 Wrong the soft passion in the world without,
 Though fortune scowl, though prudence interfere,
 One thing is certain : Love will triumph here !
 Lords of creation, whom your ladies rule,—
 The world's great masters, when you're out of
 school,—

Learn the brief moral of our evening's play :
Man has his will,—but woman has her way !
While man's dull spirit toils in smoke and fire,
Woman's swift instinct threads the electric wire,—
The magic bracelet stretched beneath the waves
Beats the black giant with his score of slaves.
All earthly powers confess your sovereign art
But that one rebel,—woman's wilful heart.
All foes you master, but a woman's wit
Lets daylight through you ere you know you're
hit.

So, just to picture what her art can do,
Hear an old story, made as good as new.

Rudolph, professor of the headsman's trade,
Alike was famous for his arm and blade.
One day a prisoner Justice had to kill
Knelt at the block to test the artist's skill.
Bare-armed, swart-visaged, gaunt, and shaggy-
browed,
Rudolph the headsman rose above the crowd.
His falchion lighted with a sudden gleam,
As the pike's armour flashes in the stream.
He sheathed his blade ; he turned as if to go ;
The victim knelt, still waiting for the blow.
“ Why strikest not ? Perform thy murderous act,”
The prisoner said. (His voice was slightly cracked.)
“ Friend, I *have* struck,” the artist straight re-
plied ;
“ Wait but one moment, and yourself decide.”
He held his snuff-box,—“ Now then, if you
please !”
The prisoner sniffed, and, with a crashing sneeze,

Off his head tumbled,—bowed along the floor,—
Bounced down the steps;—the prisoner said no
more !

Woman ! thy falchion is a glittering eye ;
If death lurk in it, oh how sweet to die !
Thou takest hearts as Rudolph took the head ;
We die with love, and never dream we're dead !



LATTER-DAY WARNINGS.

WHEN legislators keep the law,
When banks dispense with bolts and locks,—
When berries—whortle, rasp, and straw—
Grow bigger *downwards* through the box,—

When he that selleth house or land
Shows leak in roof or flaw in right,—
When haberdashers choose the stand
Whose window hath the broadest light,—

When preachers tell us all they think,
And party leaders all they mean,—
When what we pay for, that we drink,
From real grape and coffee-bean,—

When lawyers take what they would give,
And doctors give what they would take,
When city fathers eat to live,
Save when they fast for conscience' sake,—

When one that hath a horse on sale
Shall bring his merit to the proof,
Without a lie for every nail
That holds the iron on the hoof,—

When in the usual place for rips
Our gloves are stitched with special care,
And guarded well the whalebone tips
Where first umbrellas need repair,—

When Cuba's weeds have quite forgot
The power of suction to resist,
And claret-bottles harbour not
Such dimples as would hold your fist,—

When publishers no longer steal,
And pay for what they stole before,
When the first locomotive's wheel
Rolls through the Hoosac tunnel's bore ;—

Till then let Cumming blaze away,
And Miller's saints blow up the globe ;
But when you see that blessed day,
Then order your ascension robe !



ALBUM VERSES.

WHEN Eve had led her lord away,
And Cain had killed his brother,
The stars and flowers, the poets say,
Agreed with one another

To cheat the cunning tempter's art,
And teach the race its duty,
By keeping on its wicked heart
Their eyes of light and beauty.

A million sleepless lids, they say,
Will be at least a warning ;
And so the flowers would watch by day,
The stars from eve to morning.

On hill and prairie, field and lawn,
Their dewy eyes upturning,
The flowers still watch from reddening dawn
Till western skies are burning.

Alas ! each hour of daylight tells
A tale of shame so crushing,
That some turn white as sea-bleached shells,
And some are always blushing.

But when the patient stars look down
On all their light discovers,
The traitor's smile, the murderer's frown,
The lips of lying lovers,

They try to shut their saddening eyes,
And in the vain endeavour
We see them twinkling in the skies,
And so they wink for ever.



A GOOD TIME GOING.

BRAVE singer of the coming time,
Sweet minstrel of the joyous present,
Crowned with the noblest wreath of rhyme,
The holly-leaf of Ayrshire's peasant,
Good-bye! good-bye!—our hearts and hands,
Our lips in honest Saxon phrases,
Cry, God be with him, till he stands
His feet among the English daisies!

'Tis here we part ;—for other eyes
The busy deck, the fluttering streamer,
The dripping arms that plunge and rise,
The waves in foam, the ship in tremor,
The kerchiefs waving from the pier,
The cloudy pillar gliding o'er him,
The deep blue desert, lone and drear,
With heaven above and home before him!

His home!—the Western giant smiles,
And twirls the spotty globe to find it ;—
This little speck the British Isles?
'Tis but a freckle,—never mind it!
He laughs, and all his prairies roll,
Each gurgling cataract roars and chuckles,
And ridges stretched from pole to pole
Heave till they crack their iron knuckles!

But Memory blushes at the sneer,
And Honour turns with frown defiant,
And Freedom, leaning on her spear,
Laughs louder than the laughing giant :

"An islet is a world," she said,
 " When glory with its dust has blended,
And Britain keeps her noble dead
 Till earth and seas and skies are rended ! "

Beneath each swinging forest-bough
 Some arm as stout in death reposes,—
From wave-washed foot to heaven-kissed brow
 Her valour's life-blood runs in roses ;
Nay, let our brothers of the West
 Write smiling in their florid pages,
One half her soil has walked the rest
 In poets, heroes, martyrs, sages !

Hugged in the clinging billow's clasp,
 From sea-weed fringe to mountain heather,
The British oak with rooted grasp
 Her slender handful holds together ;—
With cliffs of white and bowers of green,
 And ocean narrowing to caress her,
And hills and threaded streams between,—
 Our little mother isle, God bless her !

In earth's broad temple where we stand,
 Fanned by the eastern gales that brought us,
We hold the missal in our hand,
 Bright with the lines our mother taught us.
Where'er its blazoned page betrays
 The glistening links of gilded fetters,
Behold, the half-turned leaf displays
 Her rubric stained in crimson letters !

Enough ! To speed a parting friend
'Tis vain alike to speak and listen ;—
Yet stay,—these feeble accents blend
With rays of light from eyes that glisten.
Good-bye ! once more,—and kindly tell
In words of peace the young world's story,—
And say, besides, we love too well
Our mothers' soil, our fathers' glory !



THE LAST BLOSSOM.

THOUGH young no more, we still would dream
Of beauty's dear deluding wiles :
The leagues of life to graybeards seem
Shorter than boyhood's lingering miles.

Who knows a woman's wild caprice ?
It played with Goethe's silvered hair,
And many a Holy Father's "niece"
Has softly smoothed the papal chair.

When sixty bids us sigh in vain
To melt the heart of sweet sixteen,
We think upon those ladies twain
Who loved so well the tough old Dean.

We see the Patriarch's wintry face,
The maid of Egypt's dusky glow,
And dream that Youth and Age embrace,
As April violets fill with snow.

Tranced in her lord's Olympian smile
His lotus-loving Memphian lies,—
The musky daughter of the Nile,
With plaited hair and almond eyes.

Might we but share one wild caress
Ere life's autumnal blossoms fall,
And Earth's brown, clinging lips impress
The long cold kiss that waits us all!

My bosom heaves, remembering yet
The morning of that blissful day,
When Rose, the flower of spring, I met,
And gave my raptured soul away.

Flung from her eyes of purest blue,
A lasso, with its leaping chain,
Light as a loop of larkspurs, flew
O'er sense and spirit, heart and brain.

Thou com'st to cheer my waning age,
Sweet vision, waited for so long!
Dove that would seek the poet's cage
Lured by the magic breath of song!

She blushes! Ah, reluctant maid,
Love's *drapeau rouge* the truth has told!
O'er girlhood's yielding barricade
Floats the great Leveller's crimson fold!

Come to my arms!—love heeds not years;
No frost the bud of passion knows.—
Ha! what is this my frenzy hears?
A voice behind me uttered,—Rose!

Sweet was her smile,—but not for me ;
 Alas ! when woman looks *too* kind,
 Just turn your foolish head and see,—
 Some youth is walking close behind !



CONTENTMENT.

“ Man wants but little here below.”

LITTLE I ask ; my wants are few ;
 I only wish a hut of stone,
 (A *very plain* brown stone will do,) That I may call my own ;—
 And close at hand is such a one,
 In yonder street that fronts the sun.

Plain food is quite enough for me ;
 Three courses are as good as ten ;—
 If Nature can subsist on three,
 Thank Heaven for three. Amen !
 I always thought cold victual nice ;—
 My *choice* would be vanilla-ice.

I care not much for gold or land ;—
 Give me a mortgage here and there,—
 Some good bank-stock, some note of hand,
 Or trifling railroad share,—
 I only ask that Fortune send
 A *little* more than I shall spend.

Honours are silly toys, I know,
 And titles are but empty names ;

I would, *perhaps*, be Plenipo,—
But only near St. James ;
I'm very sure I should not care
To fill our Gubernator's chair.

Jewels are baubles; 'tis a sin
To care for such unfruitful things ;
One good-sized diamond in a pin,—
Some, *not so large*, in rings,—
A ruby, and a pearl, or so,
Will do for me ;—I laugh at show.

My dame should dress in cheap attire ;
(Good, heavy silks are never dear ;)
I own perhaps I *might* desire
Some shawls of true Cashmere,—
Some marrowy crapes of China silk,
Like wrinkled skins on scalded milk.

I would not have the horse I drive
So fast that folks must stop and stare ;
An easy gait—two, forty-five—
Suits me ; I do not care ;—
Perhaps for just a *single spurt*,
Some seconds less would do no hurt.

Of pictures, I should like to own
Titians and Raphaels three or four,—
I love so much their style and tone,—
One Turner, and no more,
(A landscape,—foreground golden dirt,—
The sunshine painted with a squirt.)

Of books but few,—some fifty score
For daily use, and bound for wear ;
The rest upon an upper floor ;—
 Some *little* luxury *there*
Of red morocco's gilded gleam
And vellum rich as country cream.

Busts, cameos, gems,—such things as these,
Which others often show for pride,
I value for their power to please,
And selfish churls deride ;—
One Stradivarius, I confess,
Two Meerschaums, I would fain possess.

Wealth's wasteful tricks I will not learn
Nor ape the glittering upstart fool ;—
Shall not carved tables serve my turn,
 But *all* must be of buhl ?
Give grasping pomp its double share,—
I ask but *one* recumbent chair.

Thus humble let me live and die,
Nor long for Midas' golden touch ;
If Heaven more generous gifts deny,
 I shall not miss them *much*,—
Too grateful for the blessing lent
Of simple tastes and mind content !



ÆSTIVATION.

AN UNPUBLISHED POEM, BY MY LATE LATIN
TUTOR.

IN candent ire the solar splendour flames ;
The foles, languescient, pend from arid rames ;
His humid front the cive, anhelng, wipes,
And dreams of erring on ventiferous ripes.

How dulce to vive occult to mortal eyes,
Dorm on the herb with none to supervise,
Carp the suave berries from the crescent vine,
And bibe the flow from longicaudate kine !

To me, alas ! no verdurous visions come,
Save yon exiguous pool's conferva-scum,—
No concave vast repeats the tender hue
That laves my milk-jug with celestial blue !

Me wretched ! Let me curr to quercine shades !
Effund your albid hausts, lactiferous maids !
Oh, might I vole to some umbrageous clump,—
Depart,—be off, —excede, —evade, —erump !



THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE ;
OR, THE WONDERFUL "ONE-HOSS SHAY."

A LOGICAL STORY.

HAVE you heard of the wonderful one-hoss shay,
That was built in such a logical way?
It ran a hundred years to a day,
And then, of a sudden, it——ah, but stay,
I'll tell you what happened without delay,
Scaring the parson into fits,
Frightening people out of their wits,—
Have you ever heard of that, I say?

Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.
Georgius Secundus was then alive,—
Snuffy old drone from the German hive.
That was the year when Lisbon-town
Saw the earth open and gulp her down,
And Braddock's army was done so brown,
Left without a scalp to its crown.
It was on the terrible Earthquake-day
That the Deacon finished the one-hoss shay.

Now in building of chaises, I tell you what,
There is always *somewhere* a weakest spot,—
In hub, tire, felloe, in spring or thill,
In panel, or crossbar, or floor, or sill,
In screw, bolt, thoroughbrace,—lurking still,
Find it somewhere you must and will,—
Above or below, or within or without,—

And that's the reason, beyond a doubt
 That a chaise *breaks down*, but doesn't *wear out*.
 But the Deacon swore (as Deacons do,
 With an "I dew vum," or an "I tell *yeou*,")
 He would build one shay to beat the taown
 'n' the keounty 'n' all the kentry raoun';
 It should be so built that it *couldn't* break daown.
 —"Fur," said the Deacon, "'t's mighty plain
 Thut the weakes' place mus' stan' the strain;
 'n' the way t' fix it, uz I maintain,
 Is only jest
 T' make that place uz strong uz the rest."

So the Deacon inquired of the village folk
 Where he could find the strongest oak,
 That couldn't be split nor bent nor broke,—
 That was for spokes and floor and sills;
 He sent for lancewood to make the thills;
 The crossbars were ash, from the straightest trees,
 The panels of white-wood, that cuts like cheese,
 But lasts like iron for things like these;
 The hubs of logs from the "Settler's ellum,"—
 Last of its timber,—they couldn't sell 'em,
 Never an axe had seen their ships,
 And the wedges flew from between their lips,
 Their blunt ends frizzled like celery-tips;
 Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw,
 Spring, tire, axle, and linchpin too,
 Steel of the finest, bright and blue;
 Thoroughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;
 Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide
 Found in the pit when the tanner died.

That was the way he "put her through."—
"There!" said the Deacon, "naow she'll dew!"

Do! I tell you, I rather guess,
She was a wonder, and nothing less!
Colts grew horses, beards turned gray,
Deacon and deaconess dropped away,
Children and grandchildren—where were they?
But there stood the stout old one-hoss shay
As fresh as on Lisbon-earthquake-day!

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED ;—it came and found
The Deacon's masterpiece strong and sound,
Eighteen hundred increased by ten ;—
"Hahnsum kerridge" they called it then.
Eighteen hundred and twenty came ;—
Running as usual much the same.
Thirty and forty at last arrive,
And then come fifty, and FIFTY-FIVE.

Little of all we value here
Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year
Without both feeling and looking queer.
In fact, there's nothing that keeps its youth,
So far as I know, but a tree and truth.
(This is a moral that runs at large ;
Take it.—You're welcome.—No extra charge.)

FIRST OF NOVEMBER,—the Earthquake-day—
There are traces of age in the one-hoss shay,
A general flavour of mild decay,
But nothing local, as one may say.

'There couldn't be,—for the Deacon's art
Had made it so like in every part
That there wasn't a chance for one to start.
For the wheels were just as strong as the thills,
And the floor was just as strong as the sills,
And the panels just as strong as the floor,
And the whipple-tree neither less nor more,
And the back-crossbar as strong as the fore,
And spring and axle and hub *encore*.
And yet, *as a whole*, it is past a doubt
In another hour it will be *worn out*!

First of November, 'Fifty-five!
This morning the parson takes a drive.
Now, small boys, get out of the way!
Here comes the wonderful one-hoss shay,
Drawn by a rat-tailed, ewe-necked bay.
"Huddup!" said the parson.—Off went they.
The parson was working his Sunday's text,—
Had got to *fifthly*, and stopped perplexed
At what the—Moses—was coming next.
All at once the horse stood still,
Close by the meet'n'-house on the hill.
—First a shiver, and then a thrill,
Then something decidedly like a spill,—
And the parson was sitting upon a rock,
At half-past nine by the meet'n'-house clock,—
Just the hour of the Earthquake shock!
—What do you think the parson found,
When he got up and stared around?
The poor old chaise in a heap or mound.
As if it had been to the mill and ground!

You see, of course, if you're not a dunce,
 How it went to pieces all at once,—
 All at once, and nothing first,—
 Just as bubbles do when they burst.

End of the wonderful one-hoss shay.
 Logic is logic. That's all I say.



PARSON TURELL'S LEGACY ;
 OR, THE PRESIDENT'S OLD ARM-CHAIR.

A MATHEMATICAL STORY.

FACTS respecting an old arm-chair.
 At Cambridge. Is kept in the College there
 Seems but little the worse for wear.
 That's remarkable when I say
 It was old in President Holyoke's day.
 (One of his boys, perhaps you know,
 Died, *at one hundred*, years ago.)
He took lodgings for rain or shine
 Under green bed-clothes in '69.

Know old Cambridge? Hope you do.—
 Born there? Don't say so! I was, too.
 (Born in a house with a gambrel-roof,—
 Standing still, if you must have proof.—
 "Gambrel?—Gambrel?"—Let me beg
 You'll look at a horse's hinder leg,—
 First great angle above the hoof,—
 That's the gambrel; hence gambrel-roof.)

—Nicest place that ever was seen,—
Colleges red and Common green,
Sidewalks brownish with trees between,
Sweetest spot beneath the skies
When the canker-worms don't rise,—
When the dust, that sometimes flies
Into your mouth and ears and eyes,
In a quiet slumber lies,
Not in the shape of unbaked pies
Such as barefoot children prize.

A kind of harbour it seems to be,
Facing the flow of a boundless sea.
Rows of gray old Tutors stand
Ranged like rocks above the sand ;
Rolling beneath them, soft and green,
Breaks the tide of bright sixteen,—
One wave, two waves, three waves, four,—
Sliding up the sparkling floor :
Then it ebbs to flow no more,
Wandering off from shore to shore
With its freight of golden ore !
—Pleasant place for boys to play ;—
Better keep your girls away ;
Hearts get rolled as pebbles do
Which countless fingering waves pursue,
And every classic beach is strown
With heart-shaped pebbles of blood-red stone.

But this is neither here nor there ;—
I'm talking about an old arm-chair.
You've heard, no doubt, of PARSON TURELL?
Over at Medfort he used to dwell ;

Married one of the Mathers' folk ;
 Got with his wife a chair of oak,—
 Funny old chair with seat like wedge,
 Sharp behind and broad front edge,—
 One of the oddest of human things,
 Turned all over with knobs and rings,—
 But heavy, and wide, and deep, and grand,—
 Fit for the worthies of the land,—
 Chief-Justice Sewall a cause to try in,
 Or Cotton Mather to sit—and lie—in.
 —Parson Turell bequeathed the same
 To a certain student,—SMITH by name ;
 These were the terms, as we are told :
 " Saide Smith saide Chaire to have and holde ;
 When he doth graduate, then to passe
 To y^e oldest Youth in y^e Senior Classe.
 On Payment of"—(naming a certain sum)—
 " By him to whom y^e Chaire shall come ;
 He to y^e oldest Senior next,
 And soe for ever,"—(thus runs the text,)—
 " But one Crown lesse then he gave to claime,
 That being his Debte for use of same."

Smith transferred it to one of the BROWNS,
 And took his money,—five silver crowns.
Brown delivered it up to MOORE,
 Who paid, it is plain, not five, but four.
Moore made over the chair to LEE,
 Who gave him crowns of silver three.
Lee conveyed it unto DREW,
 And now the payment, of course, was two.
Drew gave up the chair to DUNN,—
 All he got, as you see, was one.

Dunn released the chair to HALL,
And got by the bargain no crown at all.
—And now it passed to a second BROWN,
Who took it and likewise *claimed a crown*.
When *Brown* conveyed it unto WARE,
Having had one crown, to make it fair,
He paid him two crowns to take the chair ;
And *Ware*, being honest (as all Wares be),
He paid one POTTER, who took it, three.
Four got ROBINSON ; five got DIX ;
JOHNSON primus demanded six ;
And so the sum kept gathering still
Till after the battle of Bunker's Hill.

—When paper money became so cheap,
Folks wouldn't count it, but said "a heap,"
A certain RICHARDS,—the books declare,—
(A.M. in '90? I've looked with care
Through the Triennial,—*name not there*,)
This person, Richards, was offered then
Eightscore pounds, but would have ten ;
Nine, I think, was the sum he took,—
Not quite certain,—but see the book.
—By and by the wars were still,
But nothing had altered the Parson's will.
The old arm-chair was solid yet,
But saddled with such a monstrous debt ;
Things grew quite too bad to bear,
Paying such sums to get rid of the chair !
But dead men's fingers hold awful tight,
And there was the will in black and white,
Plain enough for a child to spell.
What should be done no man could tell,

For the chair was a kind of nightmare curse,
And every season but made it worse.

As a last resort, to clear the doubt,
They got old GOVERNOR HANCOCK out.
The Governor came with his Lighthorse Troop
And his mounted truckmen, all cock-a-hoop ;
Halberds glittered and colours flew,
French horns whinnied and trumpets blew,
The yellow fifes whistled between their teeth
And the bumble-bee bass-drums boomed beneath ;
So he rode with all his band,
Till the President met him, cap in hand.
—The Governor “ hefted ” the crowns, and said,—
“ A will is a will, and the Parson’s dead.”
The Governor hefted the crowns. Said he,—
“ There is your p’int. And here’s my fee.
These are the terms you must fulfil,—
On such conditions I BREAK THE WILL ! ”
The Governor mentioned what these should be.
(Just wait a minute and then you’ll see.)
The President prayed. Then all was still,
And the Governor rose and BROKE THE WILL !
—“ About those conditions ? ” Well, now you go
And do as I tell you, and then you’ll know
Once a year, on Commencement day,
If you’ll only take the pains to stay,
You’ll see the President in the CHAIR,
Likewise the Governor sitting there.
The President rises ; both old and young
May hear his speech in a foreign tongue,
The meaning whereof, as lawyers swear,
Is this : Can I keep this old arm-chair ?

And then his Excellency bows,
 As much as to say that he allows.
 The Vice-Gub. next is called by name ;
 He bows like t'other, which means the same,
 And all the officers round 'em bow,
 As much as to say that *they* allow.
 And a lot of parchments about the chair
 Are handed to witnesses then and there,
 And then the lawyers hold it clear
 That the chair is safe for another year.

God bless you, Gentlemen ! Learn to give
 Money to colleges while you live.
 Don't be silly and think you'll try
 To bother the colleges, when you die,
 With codicil this, and codicil that,
 That Knowledge may starve while Law grows fat ;
 For there never was pitcher that wouldn't spill,
 And there's always a flaw in a donkey's will !

ODE FOR A SOCIAL MEETING.

WITH SLIGHT ALTERATIONS BY A TEETOTALLER.

COME ! fill a fresh bumper, for why should we go
 logwood
 While the ~~nectar~~ still reddens our cups as they flow ?
 decoction
 Pour out the rich juices still bright with the sun,
 dye-stuff
 Till o'er the brimmed crystal the rubies shall run.

half-ripened apples
The purple-globed clusters their life-dews have bled ;
taste sugar of lead
How sweet is the breath of the fragrance they shed !
rank poisons wines !!!
For summer's last roses lie hid in the wines
stable-boys smoking long-nines
That were garnered by maidens who laughed thro'
the vines.
scowl howl scoff sneer
Then a smile, and a glass, and a toast, and a cheer,
strychnine and whiskey, and ratsbane and beer
For all the good wine, and we've some of it here !
In cellar, in pantry, in attic, in hall,
Down, down with the tyrant that masters us all !
Long live the gay servant that laughs for us all !



POEMS

FROM THE

*PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST
TABLE.—1858-1859.*



UNDER THE VIOLETS.

HER hands are cold ; her face is white ;
No more her pulses come and go ;
Her eyes are shut to life and light ;
Fold the white vesture, snow on snow,
And lay her where the violets blow.

But not beneath a graven stone,
To plead for tears with alien eyes ;
A slender cross of wood alone
Shall say, that here a maiden lies
In peace beneath the peaceful skies.

And gray old trees of hugest limb
Shall wheel their circling shadows round
To make the scorching sunlight dim
That drinks the greenness from the ground,
And drop their dead leaves on her mound.

When o'er their boughs the squirrels run,
And through their leaves the robins call,
And, ripening in the autumn sun,
The acorns and the chestnuts fall,
Doubt not that she will heed them all.

For her the morning choir shall sing
Its matins from the branches high,
And every minstrel voice of Spring,
That trills beneath the April sky,
Shall greet her with its earliest cry.

When, turning round their dial-track,
Eastward the lengthening shadows pass,
Her little mourners, clad in black,
The crickets, sliding through the grass,
Shall pipe for her an evening mass.

At last the rootlets of the trees
Shall find the prison where she lies,
And bear the buried dust they seize
In leaves and blossoms to the skies.
So may the soul that warmed it rise !

If any, born of kindlier blood,
Should ask, What maiden lies below ?
Say only this : A tender bud,
That tried to blossom in the snow,
Lies withered where the violets blow.

HYMN OF TRUST.

O LOVE Divine, that stooped to share
Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear,
On Thee we cast each earth-born care,
We smile at pain while Thou art near !

Though long the weary way we tread,
And sorrow crown each lingering year,
No path we shun, no darkness dread,
Our hearts still whispering, Thou art near !

When drooping pleasure turns to grief,
And trembling faith is changed to fear,
The murmuring wind, the quivering leaf,
Shall softly tell us, Thou art near !

On Thee we fling our burdening woe,
O Love Divine, for ever dear,
Content to suffer while we know,
Living and dying, Thou art near !

*A SUN-DAY HYMN.*

LORD of all being ! throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star ;
Centre and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near !

Sun of our life, Thy quickening ray
Sheds on our path the glow of day ;

Star of our hope, Thy softened light
Cheers the long watches of the night.

Our midnight is Thy smile withdrawn ;
Our noontide is Thy gracious dawn ;
Our rainbow arch Thy mercy's sign ;
All, save the clouds of sin, are Thine !

Lord of all life, below, above,
Whose light is truth, whose warmth is love,
Before Thy ever-blazing throne
We ask no lustre of our own.

Grant us Thy truth to make us free,
And kindling hearts that burn for Thee,
Till all Thy living altars claim
One holy light, one heavenly flame !



THE CROOKED FOOTPATH.

AH, here it is ! the sliding rail
That marks the old remembered spot,—
The gap that struck our school-boy trail,—
The crooked path across the lot,

It left the road by school and church,
A pencilled shadow, nothing more,
That parted from the silver-birch
And ended at the farm-house door.

No line or compass traced its plan ;
With frequent bends to left or right,
In aimless, wayward curves it ran,
But always kept the door in sight.

The gabled porch, with woodbine green,—
The broken millstone at the sill,—
Though many a rood might stretch between,
The truant child could see them still.

No rocks across the pathway lie,—
No fallen trunk is o'er it thrown,—
And yet it winds, we know not why,
And turns as if for tree or stone.

Perhaps some lover trod the way
With shaking knees and leaping heart,—
And so it often runs astray
With sinuous sweep or sudden start.

Or one, perchance, with clouded brain
From some unholy banquet reeled,—
And since, our devious steps maintain
His track across the trodden field.

Nay, deem not thus,—no earth-born will
Could ever trace a faultless line ;
Our truest steps are human still,—
To walk unswerving were divine !

Truants from love, we dream of wrath ;—
Oh, rather let us trust the more !
Through all the wanderings of the path,
We still can see our Father's door !

IRIS, HER BOOK.

I PRAY thee by the soul of her that bore thee,
By thine own sister's spirit I implore thee,
Deal gently with the leaves that lie before thee !

For Iris had no mother to infold her,
Nor ever leaned upon a sister's shoulder,
Telling the twilight thoughts that Nature told her.

She had not learned the mystery of awaking
Those chorded keys that soothe a sorrow's aching,
Giving the dumb heart voice, that else were breaking.

Yet lived, wrought, suffered. Lo, the pictured
token !
Why should her fleeting day-dreams fade unspoken,
Like daffodils that die with sheaths unbroken ?

She knew not love, yet lived in maiden fancies,—
Walked simply clad, a queen of high romances,
And talked strange tongues with angels in her
trances.

Twin-souled she seemed, a two-fold nature wear-
ing,—
Sometimes a flashing falcon in her daring,
Then a poor mateless dove that droops despairing.

Questioning all things : Why her Lord had sent
her ?

What were these torturing gifts, and wherefore
lent her ?

Scornful as spirit fallen, its own tormentor.

And then all tears and anguish : Queen of Heaven :
Sweet Saints, and Thou by mortal sorrows riven,
Save me ! Oh, save me ! Shall I die forgiven ?

And then—Ah, God ! But nay, it little matters :
Look at the wasted seeds that autumn scatters :
The myriad germs that Nature shapes and shatters !

If she had—Well ! She longed, and knew not
wherefore
Had the world nothing she might live to care for ?
No second self to say her evening prayer for ?

She knew the marble shapes that set men dreaming.
Yet with her shoulders bare and tresses streaming
Showed not unlovely to her simple seeming.

Vain ? Let it be so ! Nature was her teacher.
What if a lonely and unsistered creature
Loved her own harmless gift of pleasing feature,

Saying, unsaddened,—This shall soon be faded,
And double-hued the shining tresses braided,
And all the sunlight of the morning shaded ?

—This her poor book is full of saddest follies,
Of tearful smiles and laughing melancholies,
With summer roses twined and wintry hollies.

In the strange crossing of uncertain chances,
Somewhere, beneath some maiden's tear-dimmed
glances
May fall her little book of dreams and fancies.

Sweet sister ! Iris, who shall never name thee,
Trembling for fear her open heart may shame
 thee,
Speaks from this vision-haunted page to claim
 thee.

Spare her, I pray thee ! If the maid is sleeping,
Peace with her ! she has had her hour of weeping.
No more ! She leaves her memory in thy keeping.



ROBINSON OF LEYDEN.

HE sleeps not here ; in hope and prayer
His wandering flock had gone before,
But he, the shepherd, might not share
Their sorrows on the wintry shore.

Before the Speedwell's anchor swung,
Ere yet the Mayflower's sail was spread,
While round his feet the pilgrims clung,
The pastor spake, and thus he said :—

“ Men, brethren, sisters, children dear !
God calls you hence from over sea ;
Ye may not build by Haerlem Meer,
Nor yet along the Zuyder-Zee.

“ Ye go to bear the saving Word
To tribes unnamed and shores untrod :
Heed well the lessons ye have heard
From those old teachers taught of God.

“Yet think not unto them was lent
All light for all the coming days,
And Heaven’s eternal wisdom spent
In making straight the ancient ways :

“The living fountain overflows
For every flock, for every lamb,
Nor heeds, though angry creeds oppose
With Luther’s dike, or Calvin’s dam.”

He spake : with lingering, long embrace,
With tears of love and partings fond,
They floated down the creeping Maas,
Along the isle of Ysselmond.

They passed the frowning towers of Briel,
The “ Hook of Holland’s ” shelf of sand,
And grated soon with lifting keel
The sullen shores of Fatherland.

No home for these !—too well they knew
The mitred king behind the throne ;—
The sails were set, the pennons flew,
And westward ho ! for worlds unknown.

—And these were they who gave us birth,
The Pilgrims of the sunset wave,
Who won for us this virgin earth,
And freedom with the soil they gave.

The pastor slumbers by the Rhine,—
In alien earth the exiles lie,—
Their nameless graves our holiest shrine,
His words our noblest battle-cry !

Still cry them, and the world shall hear,
Ye dwellers by the storm-swept sea !
Ye *have* not built by Haerlem Meer,
Nor on the land-locked Zuyder-Zee !



ST. ANTHONY THE REFORMER.

HIS TEMPTATION.

No fear lest praise should make us proud !
We know how cheaply that is won ;
The idle homage of the crowd
Is proof of tasks as idly done.

A surface-smile may pay the toil
That follows still the conquering Right,
With soft, white hands to dress the spoil
That sun-browned valour clutched in fight.

Sing the sweet song of other days,
Serenely placid, safely true,
And o'er the present's parching ways
The verse distils like evening dew.

But speak in words of living power,—
They fall like drops of scalding rain
That plashed before the burning shower
Swept o'er the cities of the plain !

Then scowling Hate turns deadly pale,—
Then Passion's half-coiled adders spring,
And, smitten through their leprous mail,
Strike right and left in hope to sting.

If thou, unmoved by poisoning wrath,
Thy feet on earth, thy heart above,
Canst walk in peace thy kingly path,
Unchanged in trust, unchilled in love,—

Too kind for bitter words to grieve,
Too firm for clamour to dismay,
When Faith forbids thee to believe,
And Meekness calls to disobey,—

Ah, then beware of mortal pride !
The smiling pride that calmly scorns
Those foolish fingers, crimson dyed
In labouring on thy crown of thorns !



THE OPENING OF THE PIANO.

IN the little southern parlour of the house you may
have seen,
With the gambrel-roof, and the gable looking west-
ward to the green,
At the side toward the sunset, with the window on
its right,
Stood the London-made piano I am dreaming of
to-night !

Ah me ! how I remember the evening when it came !
What a cry of eager voices, what a group of cheeks
in flame,

When the wondrous box was opened that had come
from over seas,

With its smell of mastic-varnish and its flash of
ivory keys !

Then the children all grew fretful in the restlessness
of joy ;

For the boy would push his sister, and the sister
crowd the boy,

Till the father asked for quiet in his grave paternal
way,

But the mother hushed the tumult with the words,
“Now, Mary, play.”

For the dear soul knew that music was a very
sovereign balm ;

She had sprinkled it over Sorrow and seen its brow
grow calm,

In the days of slender harpsichords with tapping
tinkling quills,

Or carolling to her spinet with its thin metallic
thrills.

So Mary, the household minstrel, who always loved
to please,

Sat down to the new “Clementi,” and struck the
glittering keys.

Hushed were the children’s voices, and every eye
grew dim,

As, floating from lip and finger, arose the “Vesper
Hymn.”

—Catherine, child of a neighbour, curly and rosy-
red
(Wedded since, and a widow,—something like ten
years dead),
Hearing a gush of music such as none before,
Steals from her mother's chamber and peeps at the
open door.

Just as the “Jubilate” in threaded whisper dies,
“Open it ! open it, lady !” the little maiden cries,
(For she thought 'twas a singing creature caged in a
box she heard),
“Open it ! open it, lady ! and let me see the *bird* !”



MIDSUMMER.

HERE ! sweep these foolish leaves away,
I will not crush my brains to-day !
Look ! are the southern curtains drawn ?
Fetch me a fan, and so begone !

Not that,—the palm-tree's rustling leaf
Brought from a parching coral-reef !
Its breath is heated ;—I would swing
The broad gray plumes,—the eagle's wing.

I hate these roses' feverish blood !—
Pluck me a half-blown lily-bud,
A long-stemmed lily from the lake,
Cold as a coiling water-snake.

Rain me sweet odours on the air,
 And wheel me up my Indian chair,
 And spread some book not otherwise
 Flat out before my sleepy eyes.

—Who knows it not,—this dead recoil
 Of weary fibres stretched with toil,—
 The pulse that flutters faint and low
 When Summer's seething breezes blow !

O Nature ! bear thy loving breast,
 And give thy child one hour of rest,—
 One little hour to lie unseen
 Beneath thy scarf of leafy green !

So, curtained by a singing pine,
 Its murmuring voice shall blend with mine
 Till, lost in dreams, my faltering lay
 In sweeter music dies away.



DE SAUTY.

AN ELECTRO-CHEMICAL ECLOGUE.

Professor, Blue-Nose.

PROFESSOR.

TELL me, O Provincial ! speak, Ceruleo-Nasal !
 Lives there one De Sauty extant now among you,
 Whispering Boanerges, son of silent thunder,
 Holding talk with nations ?

Is there a De Sauty ambulant on Tellus,
 Bifid-cleft like mortals, dormant in nightcap,
 Having sight, smell, hearing, food-receiving feature
 Three times daily patent?

Breathes there such a being, O Ceruleo-Nasal?
 Or is he a *mythus*,—ancient word for “humbug.”—
 Such as Livy told about the wolf that wet-nursed
 Romulus and Remus?

Was he born of woman, this alleged De Sauty?
 Or a living product of galvanic action,
 Like the *acarus* bred in Crosse’s flint-solution?
 Speak, thou Cyano-Rhinal!

BLUE-NOSE.

Many things thou askest, jackknife-bearing stranger,
 Much-conjecturing mortal, pork-and-treacle-waster!
 Pretermitt thy whittling, wheel thine ear-flap toward
 me,
 Thou shalt hear them answered.

When the charge galvanic tingled through the
 cable,
 At the polar focus of the wire electric
 Suddenly appeared a white-faced man among us:
 Called himself “DE SAUTY.”

As the small opossum held in pouch maternal
 Grasps the nutrient organ whence the term *mam-*
malia,
 So the unknown stranger held the wire electric,
 Sucking in the current.

When the current strengthened, bloomed the pale-
faced stranger,—

Took no drink nor victual, yet grew fat and rosy,—
And from time to time, in sharp articulation,
Said, "*All right!* DE SAUTY."

From the lonely station passed the utterance,
spreading

Through the pines and hemlocks to the groves of
steeples,

Till the land was filled with loud reverberations
Of "*All right!* DE SAUTY."

When the current slackened, drooped the mystic
stranger,—

Faded, faded, faded, as the stream grew weaker,—
Wasted to a shadow, with a hartshorn odour
Of disintegration.

Drops of deliquescence glistened on his forehead,
Whitened round his feet the dust of efflorescence,
Till one Monday morning, when the flow suspended,
There was no De Sauty.

Nothing but a cloud of elements organic,
C. O. H. N. Ferrum, Chlor. Flu. Sil. Potassa,
Calc. Sod. Phosph. Mag. Sulphur, Mang. (?)
Alumin. (?) Cuprum (?)
Such as man is made of.

Born of stream galvanic, with it he had perished!
There is no De Sauty now there is no current!
Give us a new cable, then again we'll hear him
Cry, "*All right!* DE SAUTY."

POEMS

FROM THE

POET AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE.

1871-1872.



HOMESICK IN HEAVEN.

THE DIVINE VOICE.

Go seek thine earth-born sisters,—thus the Voice
That all obey,—the sad and silent three ;
These only, while the hosts of Heaven rejoice,
Smile never : ask them what their sorrows be :

And when the secret of their griefs they tell,
Look on them with thy mild, half-human eyes ;
Say what thou wast on earth ; thou knowest well ;
So shall they cease from unavailing sighs.

THE ANGEL.

—Why thus, apart,—the swift-winged herald
spake,—
Sit ye with silent lips and unstrung lyres

While the trisagion's blending chords awake
In shouts of joy from all the heavenly choirs?

THE FIRST SPIRIT.

--Chide not thy sisters,—thus the answer came ;—
Children of earth, our half-weaned nature clings
To earth's fond memories, and her whispered name
Untunes our quivering lips, our saddened strings ;

For there we loved, and where we love is home,
Home that our feet may leave, but not our
hearts,
Though o'er us shine the jasper-lighted dome :—
'The chain may lengthen, but it never parts !

Sometimes a sunlit sphere comes rolling by,
And then we softly whisper,—*can it be ?*
And leaning toward the silvery orb, we try
To hear the music of its murmuring sea ;

To catch, perchance, some flashing glimpse of green,
Or breathe some wild-wood fragrance, wafted
through
The opening gates of pearl, that fold between
The blinding splendours and the changeless blue.

THE ANGEL.

—Nay, sister, nay ! a single healing leaf
Plucked from the bough of yon twelve-rooted tree,
Would soothe such anguish,—deeper stabbing grief
Has pierced thy throbbing heart—

THE FIRST SPIRIT.

Ah ! woe is me !

I from my clinging babe was rudely torn ;
His tender lips a loveless bosom pressed ;
Can I forget him in my life new born ?
Oh that my darling lay upon my breast !

THE ANGEL.

—And thou?—

THE SECOND SPIRIT.

I was a fair and youthful bride,
The kiss of love still burns upon my cheek,
He whom I worshipped, ever at my side,—
Him through the spirit realm in vain I seek.

Sweet faces turn their beaming eyes on mine ;
Ah ! not in these the wished-for look I read ;
Still for that one dear human smile I pine ;
Thou and none other !—is the lover's creed.

THE ANGEL.

—And whence *thy* sadness in a world of bliss
Where never parting comes, nor mourner's tear ?
Art thou, too, dreaming of a mortal's kiss
Amid the seraphs of the heavenly sphere ?

THE THIRD SPIRIT.

—Nay, tax not me with passion's wasting fire ;
When the swift message set my spirit free,
Blind, helpless, lone, I left my gray-haired sire ;
My friends were many, he had none save me.

I left him, orphaned, in the starless night ;
Alas ! for him no cheerful morning's dawn !
I wear the ransomed spirit's robe of white,
Yet still I hear him moaning, *Shè is gone !*

THE ANGEL.

—Ye know me not, sweet sisters ?—All in vain
Ye seek your lost ones in the shapes they wore ;
The flower once opened may not bud again,
The fruit once fallen finds the stem no more.

Child, lover, sire,—yea, all things loved below,—
Fair pictures damasked on a vapour's fold,—
Fade like the roseate flush, the golden glow,
When the bright curtain of the day is rolled.

I was the babe that slumbered on *thy* breast.
—And, sister, mine the lips that called *thee* bride.
—Mine were the silvered locks *thy* hand caressed,
That faithful hand, my faltering footsteps' guide !

Each changing form, frail vesture of decay,
The soul unclad forgets it once hath worn,
Stained with the travel of the weary day,
And shamed with rents from every wayside thorn.

To lie, an infant, in *thy* fond embrace, —
To come with love's warm kisses back to *thee*, —
To show *thine* eyes thy gray-haired father's face,
Not Heaven itself could grant ; this may not be !

Then spread your folded wings, and leave to earth
The dust once breathing ye have mourned so long,
Till Love, new risen, owns his heavenly birth,
And sorrow's discords sweeten into song !

FANTASIA.

THE YOUNG GIRL'S POEM.

Kiss mine eyelids, beauteous Morn,
Blushing into life new-born !
Lend me violets for my hair,
And thy russet robe to wear,
And thy ring of rosiest hue
Set in drops of diamond dew !

Kiss my cheek, thy noontide ray,
From my Love so far away !
Let thy splendour streaming down
Turn its pallid lilies brown,
Till its darkening shades reveal
Where his passion pressed its seal !

Kiss my lips, thou Lord of light,
Kiss my lips a soft good-night !
Westward sinks thy golden car ;
Leave me but the evening star,
And my solace that shall be,
Borrowing all its light from thee !



AUNT TABITHA.

THE YOUNG GIRL'S POEM.

WHATEVER I do, and whatever I say,
 Aunt Tabitha tells me that isn't the way ;
 When *she* was a girl (forty summers ago)
 Aunt Tabitha tells me they never did so.

Dear aunt ! If I only would take her advice !
 But I like my own way, and I find it *so* nice !
 And besides, I forget half the things I am told ;
 But they all will come back to me—when I am old.

If a youth passes by, it may happen, no doubt,
 He may chance to look in as I chance to look out ;
She would never endure an impertinent stare,—
 It is *horrid*, she says, and I mustn't sit there.

A walk in the moonlight has pleasures, I own,
 But it isn't quite safe to be walking alone ;
 So I take a lad's arm,—just for safety, you know,—
 But Aunt Tabitha tells me *they* didn't do so.

How wicked we are, and how good they were then !
 They kept at arm's length those detestable men ;
 What an era of virtue she lived in !—But stay—
 Were the *men* all such rogues in Aunt Tabitha's
 day ?

If the men *were* so wicked, I'll ask my papa
 How he dared to propose to my darling mamma :
 Was he like the rest of them ? Goodness ! Who
 knows ?

And what shall *I* say, if a wretch should propose ?

I am thinking if aunt knew so little of sin,
 What a wonder Aunt Tabitha's aunt must have
 been !

And her grand-aunt—it scares me—how shockingly
 sad

That we girls of to-day are so frightfully bad !

A martyr will save us, and nothing else can ;
 Let *me* perish—to rescue some wretched young
 man !

Though when to the altar a victim I go,
 Aunt Tabitha'll tell me *she* never did so !



WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR-DRIFTS.

FROM THE YOUNG ASTRONOMER'S POEM.

I. AMBITION.

ANOTHER clouded night ; the stars are hid,
 The orb that waits my search is hid with them.
 Patience ! Why grudge an hour, a month, a year,
 To plant my ladder and to gain the round
 That leads my footsteps to the heaven of fame,
 Where waits the wreath my sleepless midnights
 won ?

Not the stained laurel such as heroes wear
 That withers when some stronger conqueror's heel
 Treads down their shrivelling trophies in the dust ;
 But the fair garland whose undying green
 Not time can change. nor wrath of gods or men !

With quickened heart-beats I shall hear the
 tongues
 That speak my praise ; but better far the sense
 That in the unshaped ages, buried deep
 In the dark mines of unaccomplished time
 Yet to be stamped with morning's royal die
 And coined in golden days,—in those dim years
 I shall be reckoned with the undying dead,
 My name emblazoned on the fiery arch,
 Unfading till the stars themselves shall fade.
 Then, as they call the roll of shining worlds,
 Sages of race unborn in accents new
 Shall count me with the Olympian ones of old,
 Whose glories kindle through the midnight sky :
 Here glows the God of Battles ; this recalls
 The Lord of Ocean, and yon far-off sphere
 The Sire of Him who gave his ancient name
 To the dim planet with the wondrous rings ;
 Here flames the Queen of Beauty's silver lamp,
 And there the moon-girt orb of mighty Jove ;
 But *this*, unseen through all earth's æons past,
 A youth who watched beneath the western star
 Sought in the darkness, found, and showed to men ;
 Linked with his name thenceforth and evermore !
 So shall that name be syllabled anew
 In all the tongues of all the tribes of men :
 I that have been through immemorial years
 Dust in the dust of my forgotten time
 Shall live in accents shaped of bloodwarm breath,
 Yea, rise in mortal semblance, newly born
 In shining stone, in undecaying bronze,
 And stand on high, and look serenely down
 On the new race that calls the earth its own.

Is this a cloud, that, blown athwart my soul,
Wears a false seeming of the pearly stain
Where worlds beyond the world their mingling
rays

Blend in soft white,—a cloud that, born of earth,
Would cheat the soul that looks for light from
heaven?

Must every coral-insect leave his sign
On each poor grain he lent to build the reef,
As Babel's builders stamped their sunburnt clay,
Or deem his patient service all in vain?
What if another sit beneath the shade
Of the broad elm I planted by the way,—
What if another heed the beacon light
I set upon the rock that wrecked my keel,—
Have I not done my task and served my kind?
Nay, rather act thy part, unnamed, unknown,
And let Fame blow her trumpet through the
world

With noisy wind to swell a fool's renown,
Joined with some truth he stumbled blindly o'er,
Or coupled with some single shining deed
That in the great account of all his days
Will stand alone upon the bankrupt sheet
His pitying angel shows the clerk of Heaven.
The noblest service comes from nameless hands,
And the best servant does his work unseen.
Who found the seeds of fire and made them
shoot,

Fed by his breath, in buds and flowers of flame?
Who forged in rolling flames the ponderous stone,
And shaped the moulded metal to his need?
Who gave the dragging car its rolling wheel,

And tamed the steed that whirls its circling
round ?

All these have left their work and not their
names,—

Why should I murmur at a fate like theirs ?

This is the heavenly light ; the pearly stain

Was but a wind-cloud drifting o'er the stars !

II. REGRETS.

BRIEF glimpses of the bright celestial spheres,
False lights, false shadows, vague, uncertain
gleams,

Pale vaporous mists, wan streaks of lurid flame,
The climbing of the upward-sailing cloud,
The sinking of the downward-falling star,—
All these are pictures of the changing moods
Borne through the midnight stillness of my soul.

Here am I, bound upon this pillared rock,
Prey to the vulture of a vast desire
That feeds upon my life. I burst my bands
And steal a moment's freedom from the beak,
The clinging talons and the shadowing plumes ;
Then comes the false enchantress, with her song ;
“ Thou wouldst not lay thy forehead in the dust
Like the base herd that feeds and breeds and
dies !

Lo, the fair garlands that I weave for thee,
Unchanging as the belt Orion wears,
Bright as the jewels of the seven-starred Crown,
The spangled stream of Berenice's hair ! ”
And so she twines the fetters with the flowers

Around my yielding limbs, and the fierce bird
 Stoops to his quarry,—then to feed his rage
 Of ravening hunger I must drain my blood
 And let the dew-drenched, poison-breeding night
 Steal all the freshness from my fading cheek,
 And leave its shadows round my caverned eyes.
 All for a line in some unheeded scroll ;
 All for a stone that tells to gaping clowns,
 “ Here lies a restless wretch beneath a clod
 Where squats the jealous nightmare men call
 Fame ! ”

I marvel not at him who scorns his kind
 And thinks not sadly of the time foretold
 When the old hulk we tread shall be a wreck,
 A slag, a cinder drifting through the sky
 Without its crew of fools ! We live too long,
 And even so are not content to die,
 But load the mould that covers up our bones
 With stones that stand like beggars by the road
 And show death's grievous wound and ask for
 tears ;

Write our great books to teach men who we are,
 Sing our fine songs that tell in artful phrase
 The secrets of our lives, and plead and pray
 For alms of memory with the after-time,
 Those few swift seasons while the earth shall wear
 Its leafy summers, ere its core grows cold
 And the moist life of all that breathes shall die ;
 Or as the new-born seer, perchance more wise,
 Would have us deem, before its growing mass,
 Pelted with star-dust, stoned with meteor-balls,
 Heats like a hammered anvil, till at last

Man and his works and all that stirred itself
 Of its own motion, in the fiery glow
 Turns to a flaming vapour, and our orb
 Shines a new sun for earths that shall be born.

I am as old as Egypt to myself,
 Brother to them that squared the pyramids
 By the same stars I watch. I read the page
 Where every letter is a glittering world,
 With them who looked from Shinar's clay-built
 towers,

Ere yet the wanderer of the Midland sea
 Had missed the fallen sister of the seven.
 I dwell in spaces vague, remote, unknown,
 Save to the silent few, who, leaving earth,
 Quit all communion with their living time.
 I lose myself in that ethereal void,
 Till I have tired my wings and long to fill
 My breast with denser air, to stand, to walk,
 With eyes not raised above my fellow-men.
 Sick of my unwalled, solitary realm,
 I ask to change the myriad lifeless worlds
 I visit as mine own for one poor patch
 Of this dull spheroid and a little breath
 To shape in word or deed to serve my kind.
 Was ever giant's dungeon dug so deep,
 Was ever tyrant's fetter forged so strong,
 Was e'er such deadly poison in the draught
 The false wife mingles for the trusting fool,
 As he whose willing victim is himself,
 Digs, forges, mingles, for his captive soul?

III. SYMPATHIES.

THE snows that glittered on the disc of Mars
 Have melted, and the planet's fiery orb
 Rolls in the crimson summer of its year ;
 But what to me the summer or the snow
 Of worlds that throb with life in forms unknown,
 If life indeed be theirs ; I heed not these.
 My heart is simply human ; all my care
 For them whose dust is fashioned like mine own ;
 These ache with cold and hunger, live in pain,
 And shake with fear of worlds more full of woe ;
 There may be others worthier of my love,
 But such I know not save through these I know.

There are two veils of language, hid beneath
 Whose sheltering folds, we dare to be ourselves ;
 And not that other self which nods and smiles
 And babbles in our name ; the one is Prayer,
 Lending its licensed freedom to the tongue
 That tells our sorrows and our sins to Heaven ;
 The other, Verse, that throws its spangled web
 Around our naked speech and makes it bold.
 I, whose best prayer is silence ; sitting dumb
 In the great temple where I nightly serve
 Him who is throned in light, have dared to claim
 The poet's franchise, though I may not hope
 To wear his garland ; hear me while I tell
 My story in such form as poets use,
 But breathed in fitful whispers, as the wind
 Sighs and then slumbers, wakes and sighs again

Thou Vision, floating in the breathless air
 Between me and the fairest of the stars,
 I tell my lonely thoughts as unto thee.
 Look not for marvels of the scholar's pen
 In my rude measure ; I can only show
 A slender-margined, unillumined page,
 And trust its meaning to the flattering eye
 That reads it in the gracious light of love.
 Ah, wouldst thou clothe thyself in breathing
 shape
 And nestle at my side, my voice should lend
 Whate'er my verse may lack of tender rhythm
 To make thee listen.

I have stood entranced

When, with her fingers wandering o'er the keys,
 The white enchantress with the golden hair
 Breathed all her soul through some unvalued
 rhyme ;
 Some flower of song that long had lost its bloom ;
 Lo ! its dead summer kindled as she sang !
 The sweet contralto, like the ringdove's coo,
 Thrilled it with brooding, fond, caressing tones,
 And the pale minstrel's passion lived again
 Tearful and trembling as a dewy rose
 The wind has shaken till it fills the air
 With light and fragrance. Such the wondrous
 charm
 A song can borrow when the bosom throbs
 That lends it breath.

So from the poet's lips

His verse sounds doubly sweet, for none like him
 Feels every cadence of its wave-like flow ;
 He lives the passion over, while he reads,

That shook him as he sang his lofty strain,
 And pours his life through each resounding line,
 As ocean, when the stormy winds are hushed,
 Still rolls and thunders through his billowy caves.

IV. MASTER AND SCHOLAR.

LET me retrace the record of the years
 That made me what I am. A man most wise,
 But overworn with toil and bent with age,
 Sought me to be his scholar,—me, run wild
 From books and teachers,—kindled in my soul
 The love of knowledge ; led me to his tower,
 Showed me the wonders of the midnight realm
 His hollow sceptre ruled, or seemed to rule,
 Taught me 'he mighty secrets of the spheres,
 Trained me to find the glimmering specks of light
 Beyond the unaided sense, and on my chart
 To string them one by one, in order due,
 As on a rosary a saint his beads.
 I was his only scholar ; I became
 The echo to his thought ; whate'er he knew
 Was mine for asking ; so from year to year
 We wrought together, till there came a time
 When I, the learner, was the master half
 Of the twinned being in the dome-crowned tower.

Minds roll in paths like planets ; they revolve
 This in a larger, that a narrower ring,
 But round they come at last to that same phase,
 That selfsame light and shade they showed before
 I learned his annual and his monthly tale,
 His weekly axiom and his daily phrase,

I felt them coming in the laden air,
 And watched them labouring up to vocal breath,
 Even as the first-born at his father's board
 Knows ere he speaks the too familiar jest
 Is on its way, by some mysterious sign
 Forewarned, the click before the striking bell.

He shrivelled as I spread my growing leaves,
 Till trust and reverence changed to pitying care ;
 He lived for me in what he once had been,
 But I for him, a shadow, a defence,
 The guardian of his fame, his guide, his staff,
 Leaned on so long he fell if left alone.
 I was his eye, his ear, his cunning hand,
 Love was my spur and longing after fame,
 But his the goading thorn of sleepless age
 That sees its shortening span, its lengthening
 shades,
 That clutches what it may with eager grasp,
 And drops at last, with empty, outstretched hands.

All this he dreamed not. He would sit him
 down
 Thinking to work his problems as of old,
 And find the star he thought so plain a blur,
 The columned figures labyrinthine wilds
 Without my comment, blind and senseless scrawls
 That vexed him with their riddles ; he would strive
 And struggle for a while, and then his eye
 Would lose its light, and over all his mind
 The cold gray mist would settle ; and ere long
 The darkness fell, and I was left alone.

•

V. ALONE.

ALONE ! no climber of an Alpine cliff,
 No Arctic venturer on the waveless sea,
 Feels the dread stillness round him as it chills
 The heart of him who leaves the slumbering earth
 To watch the silent worlds that crowd the sky.

Alone ! And as the shepherd leaves his flock
 To feed upon the hillside, he meanwhile
 Finds converse in the warblings of the pipe
 Himself has fashioned for his vacant hour,
 So have I grown companion to myself,
 And to the wandering spirits of the air
 That smile and whisper round us in our dreams.
 Thus have I learned to search if I may know
 The whence and why of all beneath the stars
 And all beyond them, and to weigh my life
 As in a balance,—poising good and ill
 Against each other,—asking of the Power
 That flung me forth among the whirling worlds
 If I am heir to any inborn right,
 Or only as an atom of the dust
 That every wind may blow where'er it will.

VI. QUESTIONING.

I AM not humble ; I was shown my place,
 Clad in such robes as Nature had at hand ;
 Took what she gave, not chose ; I know no shame,
 No fear for being simply what I am.
 I am not proud, I hold my every breath

At Nature's mercy. I am as a babe
 Borne in a giant's arms, he knows not where ;
 Each several heart-beat, counted like the coin
 A miser reckons, is a special gift
 As from an unseen hand ; if that withhold
 Its bounty for a moment, I am left
 A clod upon the earth to which I fall.

Something I find in me that well might claim
 The love of beings in a sphere above
 This doubtful twilight world of right and wrong ;
 Something that shows me of the selfsame clay
 That creeps or swims or flies in humblest form.
 Had I been asked, before I left my bed
 Of shapeless dust, what clothing I would wear,
 I would have said, More angel and less worm ;
 But for their sake who are even such as I,
 Of the same mingled blood, I would not choose
 To hate that meaner portion of myself
 Which makes me brother to the least of men.

I dare not be a coward with my lips
 Who dare to question all things in my soul ;
 Some men may find their wisdom on their knees,
 Some prone and grovelling in the dust like slaves ;
 Let the meek glow-worm glisten in the dew ;
 I ask to lift my taper to the sky
 As they who hold their lamps above their heads,
 Trusting the larger currents up aloft,
 Rather than crossing eddies round their breast,
 Threatening with every puff the flickering blaze.

My life shall be a challenge, not a truce !
 This is my homage to the mightier powers,
 To ask my boldest question, undismayed
 By muttered threats that some hysteric sense
 Of wrong or insult will convulse the throne
 Where wisdom reigns supreme ; and if I err,
 They all must err who have to feel their way
 As bats that fly at noon ; for what are we
 But creatures of the night, dragged forth by day,
 Who needs must stumble, and with stammering steps
 Spell out their paths in syllables of pain ?

Thou wilt not hold in scorn the child who dares
 Look up to Thee, the Father,—dares to ask
 More than Thy wisdom answers. From Thy hand
 The worlds were cast ; yet every leaflet claims
 From that same hand its little shining sphere
 Of star-lit dew ; thine image, the great sun,
 Girt with his mantle of tempestuous flame,
 Glares in mid-heaven ; but to his noontide blaze
 The slender violet lifts its lidless eye,
 And from his splendour steals its fairest hue,
 Its sweetest perfume from his scorching fire.

VII.—WORSHIP.

FROM my lone turret as I look around
 O'er the green meadows to the ring of blue,
 From slope, from summit, and from half-hid vale
 The sky is stabbed with dagger-pointed spires
 Their gilded symbols whirling in the wind,
 Their brazen tongues proclaiming to the world,
 " Here truth is sold, the only genuine ware ;

See that it has our trade-mark ! You will buy
 Poison instead of food across the way,
 The lies of——" this or that, each several name
 The standard's blazon and the battle-cry
 Of some true-gospel faction, and again
 The token of the Beast to all beside.
 And grouped round each I see a huddling crowd
 Alike in all things save the words they use ;
 In love, in longing, hate and fear the same.

Whom do we trust and serve? We speak of one
 And bow to many ; Athens still would find
 The shrines of all she worshipped safe within
 Our tall barbarian temples, and the thrones
 That crowned Olympus mighty as of old.
 The god of music rules the Sabbath choir ;
 The lyric muse must leave the sacred nine
 To help us please the dilettante's ear ;
 Plutus limps homeward with us, as we leave
 The portals of the temple where we knelt
 And listened while the god of eloquence
 (Hermes of ancient days, but now disguised
 In sable vestments) with that other god
 Somnus, the son of Erebus and Nox,
 Fights in unequal contest for our souls ;
 The dreadful sovereign of the under world
 Still shakes his sceptre at us, and we hear
 The baying of the triple-throated hound ;
 Eros is young as ever, and as fair
 The lovely Goddess born of ocean's foam.

These be thy gods, O Israel ! Who is he,
 The one ye name and tell us that ye serve,

Whom ye would call me from my lonely tower
 To worship with the many-headed throng?
 Is it the God that walked in Eden's grove
 In the cool hour to seek our guilty sire?
 The God who dealt with Abraham as the sons
 Of that old patriarch deal with other men?
 The jealous God of Moses, one who feels
 An image as an insult, and is wroth
 With him who made it and his child unborn?
 The God who plagued His people for the sin
 Of their adulterous king, beloved of him,—
 The same who offers to a chosen few
 The right to praise Him in eternal song,
 While a vast shrieking world of endless woe
 Blends its dread chorus with their rapturous hymn?
 Is this the God you mean, or is it He
 Who heeds the sparrow's fall, whose loving heart
 Is as the pitying father's to his child,
 Whose lesson to His children is "Forgive,"
 Whose plea for all, "They know not what they
 do?"

VIII.—MANHOOD.

I CLAIM the right of knowing whom I serve,
 Else is my service idle; He that asks
 My homage asks it from a reasoning soul.
 To crawl is not to worship; we have learned
 A drill of eyelids, bended neck and knee,
 Hanging our prayers on hinges, till we ape
 The flexures of the many-jointed worm.
 Asia has taught her Allahs and salaams
 To the world's children,—we have grown to men!

We who have rolled the sphere beneath our feet
 To find a virgin forest, as we lay
 The beams of our rude temple, first of all
 Must frame its doorway high enough for man
 To pass unstooping ; knowing as we do
 That He who shaped us last of living forms
 Has long enough been served by creeping things,
 Reptiles that left their footprints in the sand
 Of old sea-margins that have turned to stone,
 And men who learned their ritual ; we demand
 To know Him first, then trust Him and then love,
 When we have found Him worthy of our love,
 Tried by our own poor hearts and not before ;
 He must be truer than the truest friend,
 He must be tenderer than a woman's love,
 A father better than the best of sires ;
 Kinder than she who bore us, though we sin
 Oftener than did the brother we are told,
 We—poor ill-tempered mortals—must forgive,
 Though seven times sinning threescore times and
 ten.

This is the new world's gospel : Be ye men !
 Try well the legends of the children's time ;
 Ye are the chosen people, God has led
 Your steps across the desert of the deep
 As now across the desert of the shore ;
 Mountains are cleft before you as the sea
 Before the wandering tribe of Israel's sons ;
 Still onward rolls the thunderous caravan,
 Its coming printed on the western sky,
 A cloud by day, by night a pillared flame ;
 Your prophets are a hundred unto one

Of them of old who cried, " Thus saith the Lord ;"
 They told of cities that should fall in heaps,
 But yours of mightier cities that shall rise,
 Where yet the lonely fishers spread their nets
 Where hides the fox and hoots the midnight owl ;
 The tree of knowledge in your garden grows
 Not single, but at every humble door ;
 Its branches lend you their immortal food,
 That fills you with the sense of what ye are,
 No servants of an altar hewed and carved
 From senseless stone by craft of human hands,
 Rabbi, or dervish, brahmin, bishop, bonze,
 But masters of the charm with which they work
 To keep your hands from that forbidden tree !

Ye that have tasted that divinest fruit,
 Look on this world of yours with opened eyes !
 Ye are as gods ! Nay, makers of your gods,—
 Each day ye break an image in your shrine
 And plant a fairer image where it stood :
 Where is the Moloch of your fathers' creed,
 Whose fires of torment burned for span-long
 babes ?

Fit object for a tender mother's love !
 Why not ? It was a bargain duly made
 For these same infants through the surety's act
 Intrusted with their all for earth and heaven,
 By Him who chose their guardian, knowing well
 His fitness for the task,—this, even this,
 Was the true doctrine only yesterday
 As thoughts are reckoned,—and to-day you hear
 In words that sound as if from human tongues
 Those monstrous, uncouth horrors of the past
 That blot the blue of heaven and shame the earth

As would the saurians of the age of slime,
 Awaking from their stony sepulchres
 And wallowing hateful in the eye of day !

IX.—RIGHTS.

WHAT am I but the creature Thou hast made ?
 What have I save the blessings Thou hast lent ?
 What hope I but Thy mercy and Thy love ?
 Who but myself shall cloud my soul with fear ?
 Whose hand protect me from myself but Thine ?

I claim the rights of weakness, I, the babe,
 Call on my sire to shield me from the ills
 That still beset my path, not trying me
 With snares beyond my wisdom or my strength,
 He knowing I shall use them to my harm,
 And find a tenfold misery in the sense
 That in my childlike folly I have sprung
 The trap upon myself as vermin use
 Drawn by the cunning bait to certain doom.
 Who wrought the wondrous charm that leads us on
 To sweet perdition, but the selfsame power
 That set the fearful engine to destroy
 His wretched offspring (as the Rabbis tell),
 And hid its yawning jaws and treacherous springs
 In such a show of innocent sweet flowers
 It lured the sinless angels and they fell ?

Ah ! He who prayed the prayer of all mankind
 Summed in those few brief words the mightiest
 plea

For erring souls before the courts of heaven,—
Save us from being tempted,—lest we fall !

If we are only as the potter's clay
 Made to be fashioned as the artist wills,
 And broken into shards if we offend
 The eye of Him who made us, it is well ;
 Such love as the insensate lump of clay
 That spins upon the swift-revolving wheel
 Bears to the hand that shapes its growing form,
 Such love, no more, will be our hearts' return
 To the great Master-workman for His care,—
 Or would be, save that this, our breathing clay,
 Is intertwined with fine innumerable threads
 That make it conscious in its framer's hand ;
 And this He must remember who has filled
 These vessels with the deadly draught of life,—
 Life, that means death to all it claims. Our
 love

Must kindle in the ray that streams from heaven,
 A faint reflection of the light divine ;
 The sun must warm the earth before the rose
 Can show her inmost heart-leaves to the sun.
 He yields some fraction of the Maker's right
 Who gives the quivering nerve its sense of pain ;
 Is there not something in the pleading eye
 Of the poor brute that suffers, which arraigns
 The law that bids it suffer? Has it not
 A claim for some remembrance in the book
 That fills its pages with the idle words
 Spoken of men? Or is it only clay,
 Bleeding and aching in the potter's hand,
 Yet all his own to treat it as he will,
 And when he will to cast it at his feet,
 Shattered, dishonoured, lost for evermore?
 My dog loves me, but could he look beyond

His earthly master, would his love extend
 To Him who—Hush! I will not doubt that
 He
 Is better than our fears, and will not wrong
 The least, the meanest of created things!

He would not trust me with the smallest orb
 That circles through the sky; He would not give
 A meteor to my guidance; would not leave
 The colouring of a cloudlet to my hand;
 He locks my beating heart beneath its bars
 And keeps the key himself; He measures out
 The draughts of vital breath that warm my blood,
 Winds up the springs of instinct which uncoil,
 Each in its season; ties me to my home,
 My race, my time, my nation, and my creed
 So closely that if I but slip my wrist
 Out of the band that cuts it to the bone,
 Men say, "He hath a devil;" He has lent
 All that I hold in trust, as unto one
 By reason of his weakness and his years
 Not fit to hold the smallest shred in fee
 Of those most common things he calls his own—
 And yet—my Rabbi tells me—He has left
 The care of that to which a million worlds
 Filled with unconscious life were less than naught,
 Has left that mighty universe, the Soul,
 To the weak guidance of our baby hands,
 Let the foul fiends have access at their will,
 Taking the shape of angels, to our hearts,—
 Our hearts already poisoned through and through
 With the fierce virus of ancestral sin;
 Turned us adrift with our immortal charge,

To wreck ourselves in gulfs of endless woe.
 If what my Rabbi tells me is the truth
 Why did the choir of angels sing for joy?
 Heaven must be compassed in a narrow space,
 And offer more than room enough for all
 That pass its portals ; but the under-world,
 The godless realm, the place where demons
 forge

Their fiery darts and adamantine chains,
 Must swarm with ghosts that for a little while
 Had worn the garb of flesh, and being heirs
 Of all the dulness of their stolid sires,
 And all the erring instincts of their tribe,
 Nature's own teaching, rudiments of "sin,"
 Fell headlong in the snare that could not fail
 To trap the wretched creatures shaped of clay
 And cursed with sense enough to lose their souls !

Brother, thy heart is troubled at my word ;
 Sister, I see the cloud is on thy brow.
 He will not blame me, He who sends not peace,
 But sends a sword, and bids us strike amain
 At Error's gilded crest, where in the van
 Of earth's great army, mingling with the best
 And bravest of its leaders, shouting loud
 The battle-cries that yesterday have led
 The host of Truth to victory, but to-day
 Are watchwords of the laggard and the slave,
 He leads his dazzled cohorts. God has made
 This world a strife of atoms and of spheres ;
 With every breath I sigh myself away
 And take my tribute from the wandering wind
 To fan the flame of life's consuming fire ;
 So, while my thought has life, it needs must burn,

And burning, set the stubble-fields ablaze,
 Where all the harvest long ago was reaped
 And safely garnered in the ancient barns,
 But still the gleaners, groping for their food,
 Go blindly feeling through the close-shorn straw,
 While the young reapers flash their glittering
 steel

Where later suns have ripened nobler grain !

X.—TRUTHS.

THE time is racked with birth-pangs ; every hour
 Brings forth some gasping truth, and truth new-
 born

Looks a misshapen and untimely growth,
 The terror of the household and its shame,
 A monster coiling in its nurse's lap
 That some would strangle, some would only starve ;
 But still it breathes, and passed from hand to
 hand,

And suckled at a hundred half-clad breasts,
 Comes slowly to its stature and its form,
 Calms the rough ridges of its dragon-scales,
 Changes to shining locks its snaky hair,
 And moves transfigured into angel guise,
 Welcomed by all that cursed its hour of birth,
 And folded in the same encircling arms
 That cast it like a serpent from their hold !

If thou wouldst live in honour, die in peace,
 Have the fine words the marble-workers learn
 To carve so well, upon thy funeral-stone,
 And earn a fair obituary, dressed

In all the many-coloured robes of praise,
 Be deafer than the adder to the cry
 Of that same foundling truth, until it grows
 To seemly favour, and at length has won
 The smiles of hard-mouthed men and light-lipped
 dames ;

Then snatch it from its meagre nurse's breast,
 Fold it in silk and give it food from gold ;
 So shalt thou share its glory when at last
 It drops its mortal vesture, and revealed
 In all the splendour of its heavenly form,
 Spreads on the startled air its mighty wings !

Alas ! how much that seemed immortal truth
 That heroes fought for, martyrs died to save,
 Reveals its earth-born lineage, growing old
 And limping in its march, its wings unplumed,
 Its heavenly semblance faded like a dream !

Here in this painted casket, just unsealed,
 Lies what was once a breathing shape like thine,
 Once loved as thou art loved ; there beamed the
 eyes

That looked on Memphis in its hour of pride,
 That saw the walls of hundred-gated Thebes,
 And all the mirrored glories of the Nile.
 See how they toiled that all-consuming time
 Might leave the frame immortal in its tomb ;
 Filled it with fragrant balms and odorous gums
 That still diffuse their sweetness through the air,
 And wound and wound with patient fold on fold
 The flaxen bands thy hand has rudely torn !
 Perchance thou yet canst see the faded stain
 Of the sad mourner's tear.

XI.—IDOLS.

BUT what is this?

The sacred beetle, bound upon the breast
Of the blind heathen ! Snatch the curious prize,
Give it a place among thy treasured spoils
Fossil and relic—corals, encrinites,
The fly in amber and the fish in stone,
The twisted circlet of Etruscan gold,
Medal, intaglio, poniard, poison-ring,—
Place for the Memphian beetle with thine hoard !

Ah ! longer than thy creed has blest the world
This toy, thus ravished from thy brother's breast,
Was to the heart of Mizraim as divine,
As holy, as the symbol that we lay
On the still bosom of our white-robed dead,
And raise above their dust that all may know
Here sleeps an heir of glory. Loving friends,
With tears of trembling faith and choking sobs,
And prayers to those who judge of mortal deeds,
Wrapped this poor image in the cerement's fold,
That Isis and Osiris, friends of man,
Might know their own and claim the ransomed soul.

An idol? Man was born to worship such !
An idol is an image of his thought ;
Sometimes he carves it out of gleaming stone,
And sometimes moulds it out of glittering gold,
Or rounds it in a mighty frescoed dome,
Or lifts it heavenward in a lofty spire,
Or shapes it in a cunning frame of words,
Or pays his priest to make it day by day ;

For sense must have its god as well as soul ;
 A new-born Dian calls for silver shrines,
 And Egypt's holiest symbol is our own,
 The sign we worship as did they of old
 When Isis and Osiris ruled the world.

Let us be true to our most subtle selves,
 We long to have our idols like the rest.
 'Think ! when the men of Israel had their God
 Encamped among them, talking with their chief,
 Leading them in the pillar of the cloud
 And watching o'er them in the shaft of fire,
 They still must have an image ; still they longed
 For somewhat of substantial, solid form
 Whereon to hang their garlands, and to fix
 Their wandering thoughts and gain a stronger hold
 For their uncertain faith, not yet assured
 If those same meteors of the day and night
 Were not mere exhalations of the soil.

Are we less earthly than the chosen race ?
 Are we more neighbours of the living God
 Than they who gathered manna every morn,
 Reaping where none had sown, and heard the voice
 Of him who met the Highest in the mount,
 And brought them tables, graven with His hand ?
 Yet these must have their idol, brought their gold,
 That star-browed Apis might be god again ;
 Yea, from their ears the women brake the rings
 That lent such splendours to the gipsy brown
 Of sunburnt cheeks,—what more could woman do
 To show her pious zeal ? They went astray,
 But nature led them as it leads us all.

We too, who mock at Israel's golden calf

And scoff at Egypt's sacred scarabee,
 Would have our amulets to clasp and kiss,
 And flood with rapturous tears, and bear with us
 To be our dear companions in the dust ;
 Such magic works an image in our souls !

Man is an embryo ; see at twenty years
 His bones, the columns that uphold his frame
 Not yet cemented, shaft and capital,
 Mere fragments of the temple incomplete.
 At twoscore, threescore, is he then full grown ?
 Nay, still a child, and as the little maids
 Dress and undress their puppets, so he tries
 To dress a lifeless creed, as if it lived,
 And change its raiment when the world cries shame !

We smile to see our little ones at play
 So grave, so thoughtful, with maternal care
 Nursing the wisps of rags they call their babes ;—
 Does He not smile who sees us with the toys
 We call by sacred names, and idly feign
 To be what we have called them ? He is still
 The Father of this helpless nursery-brood,
 Whose second childhood joins so close its first,
 That in the crowding, hurrying years between
 We scarce have trained our senses to their task
 Before the gathering mist has dimmed our eyes,
 And with our hollowed palm we help our ear,
 And trace with trembling hand our wrinkled names,
 And then begin to tell our stories o'er,
 And see—not hear—the whispering lips that say,
 “ You know—— ? Your father knew him.—This is
 he,
 Tottering and leaning on the hireling's arm,”—

And so, at length, disrobed of all that clad
 The simple life we share with weed and worm,
 Go to our cradles, naked as we came.

XII.—LOVE.

WHAT if a soul redeemed, a spirit that loved
 While yet on earth and was beloved in turn,
 And still remembered every look and tone
 Of that dear earthly sister who was left
 Among the unwise virgins at the gate,—
 Itself admitted with the Bridegroom's train,—
 What if this spirit redeemed, amid the host
 Of chanting angels, in some transient lull
 Of the eternal anthem, heard the cry
 Of its lost darling, whom in evil hour
 Some wilder pulse of nature led astray
 And left an outcast in a world of fire,
 Condemned to be the sport of cruel fiends,
 Sleepless, unpitying masters of the skill
 'To wring the maddest ecstasies of pain
 From worn-out souls that only ask to die,—
 Would it not long to leave the bliss of heaven,—
 Bearing a little water in its hand
 To moisten those poor lips that plead in vain
 With Him we call our Father? Or is all
 So changed in such as taste celestial joy
 They hear unmoved the endless wail of woe;
 The daughter in the same dear tones that hushed
 Her cradled slumbers; she who once had held
 A babe upon her bosom from its voice
 Hoarse with its cry of anguish, yet the same?

No ! not in ages when the Dreadful Bird
 Stamped his huge footprints, and the Fearful
 Beast

Strode with the flesh about those fossil bones
 We build to mimic life with pigmy hands,—
 Not in those earliest days when men ran wild
 And gashed each other with their knives of
 stone,

When their low foreheads bulged in ridgy brows
 And their flat hands were callous in the palm
 With walking in the fashion of their sires,
 Grope as they might to find a cruel god
 To work their will on such as human wrath
 Had wrought its worst to torture, and had left
 With rage unsated, white and stark and cold,
 Could hate have shaped a demon more malign
 Than him the dead men mummied in their creed
 And taught their trembling children to adore !

Made in *His* image ! Sweet and gracious
 souls

Dear to my heart by nature's fondest names,
 Is not your memory still the precious mould
 That lends its form to Him who hears my prayer ?
 Thus only I behold Him, like to them,
 Long-suffering, gentle, ever slow to wrath,
 If wrath it be that only wounds to heal,
 Ready to meet the wanderer ere he reach
 The door he seeks, forgetful of his sin,
 Longing to clasp him in a father's arms,
 And seal his pardon with a pitying tear !

Four gospels tell their story to mankind,
 And none so full of soft, caressing words

That bring the Maid of Bethlehem and her Babe
 Before our tear-dimmed eyes, as his who learned
 In the meek service of his gracious art
 The tones which like the medicinal balms
 That calm the sufferer's anguish, soothe our souls.
 —Oh that the loving woman, she who sat
 So long a listener at her Master's feet,
 Had left us Mary's Gospel,—all she heard
 Too sweet, too subtle for the ear of man!
 Mark how the tender-hearted mothers read
 The messages of love between the lines
 Of the same page that loads the bitter tongue
 Of him who deals in terror as his trade
 With threatening words of wrath that scorch like
 flame!

They tell of angels whispering round the bed
 Of the sweet infant smiling in its dream,
 Of lambs enfolded in the Shepherd's arms,
 Of Him who blessed the children; of the land
 Where crystal rivers feed unfading flowers,
 Of cities golden-paved with streets of pearl,
 Of the white robes the winged creatures wear,
 The crowns and harps from whose melodious
 strings

One long, sweet anthem flows for evermore!

—We too had human mothers, even as Thou,
 Whom we have learned to worship as remote
 From mortal kindred, wast a cradled babe.
 The milk of woman filled our branching veins,
 She lulled us with her tender nursery-song,
 And folded round us her untiring arms,
 While the first unremembered twilight year
 Shaped us to conscious being; still we feel

Her pulses in our own,—too faintly feel ;
 Would that the heart of woman warmed our
 creeds !

Not from the sad-eyed hermit's lonely cell,
 Not from the conclave where the holy men
 Glare on each other, as with angry eyes
 They battle for God's glory and their own,
 Till, sick of wordy strife, a show of hands
 Fixes the faith of ages yet unborn,—
 Ah, not from these the listening soul can hear
 The Father's voice that speaks itself divine !
 Love must be still our Master ; till we learn
 What he can teach us of a woman's heart,
 We know not Ilis whose love embraces all.



EPILOGUE TO THE BREAKFAST- TABLE SERIES.

AUTOCRAT—PROFESSOR—POET. *At a bookstore.*
Anno Domini 1972.

A CRAZY bookcase, placed before
 A low-price dealer's open door ;
 Therein arrayed in broken rows
 A ragged crew of rhyme and prose,
 The homeless vagrants, waifs and strays
 Whose low estate this line betrays
 (Set forth the lesser birds to lime)
 YOUR CHOICE AMONG THESE BOOKS, 1 DIME !

Ho! dealer; for its motto's sake
 This scarecrow from the shelf I take;
 Three starveling volumes bound in one,
 Its covers warping in the sun.
 Methinks it hath a musty smell,
 I like its flavour none too well,
 But Yorick's brain was far from dull,
 Though Hamlet pah! 'd, and dropped his skull.

Why, here comes rain! The sky grows dark,—
 Was that the roll of thunder? Hark!
 The shop affords a safe retreat,
 A chair extends its welcome seat,
 The tradesman has a civil look
 (I've paid, impromptu, for my book),
 The clouds portend a sudden shower,—
 I'll read my purchase for an hour.

.

What have I rescued from the shelf?
 A Boswell, writing out himself!
 For though he changes dress and name,
 The man beneath is still the same,
 Laughing or sad, by fits and starts,
 One actor in a dozen parts,
 And whatsoe'er the mask may be,
 The voice assures us, *This is he.*

I say not this to cry him down;
 I find my Shakespeare in his clown,
 His rogues the selfsame parent own;
 Nay! Satan talks in Milton's tone!
 Where'er the ocean inlet strays,
 The salt sea wave its source betrays,

Where'er the queen of summer blows,
She tells the zephyr, "I'm the rose!"
And his is not the playwright's page;
His table does not ape the stage;
What matter if the figures seen
Are only shadows on a screen,
He finds in them his lurking thought,
And on their lips the words he sought,
Like one who sits before the keys
And plays a tune himself to please.

And was he noted in his day?
Read, flattered, honoured? Who shall say?
Poor wreck of time the wave has cast
To find a peaceful shore at last,
Once glorying in thy gilded name
And freighted deep with hopes of fame,
Thy leaf is moistened with a tear,
The first for many a long, long year!

For be it more or less of art
That veils the lowliest human heart
Where passion throbs, where friendship glows,
Where pity's tender tribute flows,
Where love has lit its fragrant fire,
And sorrow quenched its vain desire.
For me the altar is divine,
Its flame, its ashes,—all are mine!

And thou, my brother, as I look
And see thee pictured in thy book,
Thy years on every page confessed
In shadows lengthening from the west,

Thy glance that wanders, as it sought
Some freshly opening flower of thought,
Thy hopeful nature, light and free,
I start to find myself in thee !

.

Come, vagrant, outcast, wretch forlorn,
In leather jerkin stained and torn,
Whose talk has filled my idle hour
And made me half forget the shower,
I'll do at least as much for you,
Your coat I'll patch, your guilt renew,
Read you—perhaps—some other time.
Not bad, my bargain ! Price one dime !



ADDITIONAL POEMS.

TO 1878.



AT A MEETING OF FRIENDS.

(August 29, 1859.)

I REMEMBER—why yes! God bless me! and was it
so long ago?

I fear I'm growing forgetful, as old folks do, you
know;

It must have been in 'forty—I would say 'thirty-nine—
We talked this matter over, I and a friend of mine.

He said, "Well now, old fellow, I'm thinking that
you and I,

If we act like other people, shall be older by-and-by;
What though the bright blue ocean is smooth as a
pond can be,

There is always a line of breakers to fringe the
broadest sea.

"We're taking it mighty easy, but that is nothing
strange,

For up to the age of thirty we spend our years like
change;

But creeping up towards the forties, as fast as the old
years fill,
And Time steps in for payment, we seem to change
a bill."

"I know it," I said, "old fellow ; you speak the
solemn truth ;
A man can't live to a hundred and likewise keep his
youth ;
But what if the ten years coming shall silver-streak
my hair,
You know I shall then be forty ; of course I shall not
care.

"At forty a man grows heavy and tired of fun and
noise,
Leaves dress to the five-and-twenties and love to the
silly boys ;
No foppish tricks at forty, no pinching of waists and
toes,
But high-low shoes and flannels and good thick
worsted hose."

But one fine August morning I found myself awake :
My birthday :—By Jove, I'm forty ! Yes, forty, and
no mistake !
Why this is the very milestone, I think I used to
hold,
That when a fellow had come to, a fellow would then
be old !

But that is the young folks' nonsense ; they're full of
their foolish stuff ;
A man's in his prime at forty,—I see *that* plain
enough ;

At *fifty* a man *is* wrinkled, and *may be* bald or gray ;
I call men old at fifty, in spite of all they say.

At last comes another August, with mist and rain and
shine ;

Its mornings are slowly counted and creep to twenty-
nine,

And when on the western summits the fading light
appears,

It touches with rosy fingers the last of my fifty years.

There have been both men and women whose hearts
were firm and bold,

But there never was one of fifty that loved to say
“ I’m old ; ”

So any elderly person that strives to shirk his years,
Make him stand up at a table and try him by his peers.

Now here I stand at fifty, my jury gathered round ;
Sprinkled with dust of silver, but not yet silver-
crowned,

Ready to meet your verdict, waiting to hear it told ;
Guilty of fifty summers ; speak ! Is the verdict *old* ?

No ! say that his hearing fails him ; say that his
sight grows dim ;

Say that he’s getting wrinkled and weak in back and
limb,

Losing his wits and temper, but pleading, to make
amends,

The youth of his fifty summers he finds in his twenty
friends.



A FAREWELL TO AGASSIZ.

How the mountains talked together,
Looking down upon the weather,
When they heard our friend had planned his
Little trip among the Andes !
How they'll bare their snowy scalps
To the climber of the Alps
When the cry goes through their passes,
" Here comes the great Agassiz ! "
" Yes, I'm tall," says Chimborazo,
" But I wait for him to say so,—
That's the only thing that lacks,—he
Must see me, Cotopaxi ! "
" Ay ! ay ! " the fire-peak thunders,
" And he must view my wonders !
I'm but a lonely crater
Till I have him for spectator ! "
The mountain hearts are yearning,
The lava-torches burning,
The rivers bend to meet him,
The forests bow to greet him,
It thrills the spinal column
Of fossil fishes solemn,
And glaciers crawl the faster
To the feet of their old master !
Heaven keep him well and hearty,
Both him and all his party !
From the sun that broils and smites,
From the centipede that bites,
From the hailstorm and the thunder,
From the vampire and the condor,

From the gust upon the river,
From the sudden earthquake shiver,
From the trip of mule or donkey,
From the midnight howling monkey
From the stroke of knife or dagger,
From the puma and the jaguar,
From the horrid boa-constrictor
That has scared us in the pictur',
From the Indians of the Pampas
Who would dine upon their grampas,
From every beast and vermin
That to think of sets us squirming,
From every snake that tries on
The traveller his p'ison,
From every pest of Natur',
Likewise the alligator,
And from two things left behind him,—
(Be sure they'll try to find him,)
The tax-bill and assessor,—
Heaven keep the great Professor !

May he find, with his apostles,
That the land is full of fossils,
That the waters swarm with fishes
Shaped according to his wishes,
That every pool is fertile
In fancy kinds of turtle,
New birds around him singing,
New insects, never stinging,
With a million novel data
About the articulata,
And facts that strip off all husks
From the history of molluscs.

And when, with loud Te Deum,
He returns to his Museum,
May he find the monstrous reptile
That so long the land has kept ill
By Grant and Sherman throttled,
And by Father Abraham bottled
(All specked and streaked and mottled
With the scars of murderous battles,
Where he clashed the iron rattles
That gods and men he shook at),
For all the world to look at !

God bless the great Professor !
And Madam, too, God bless her !
Bless him and all his band,
On the sea and on the land,
Bless them head and heart and hand,
Till their glorious raid is o'er,
And they touch our ransomed shore !
Then the welcome of a nation,
With its shout of exultation,
Shall awake the dumb creation,
And the shapes of buried æons
Join the living creatures' pæans,
Till the fossil echoes roar ;
While the mighty megalosaurus
Leads the palæozoic chorus,—
God bless the great Professor,
And the land his proud possessor,—
Bless them now and evermore !

1865.



*A SEA DIALOGUE.**Cabin Passenger.**Man at Wheel.**Cabin Passenger.*

FRIEND, you seem thoughtful. I not wonder much
That he who sails the ocean should be sad.
I am myself reflective.—When I think
Of all this wallowing beast, the Sea, has sucked
Between his sharp, thin lips, the wedgy waves,
What heaps of diamonds, rubies, emeralds, pearls ;
What piles of shekels, talents, ducats, crowns,
What bales of Tyrian mantles, Indian shawls,
Of laces that have blanked the weavers' eyes,
Of silken tissues, wrought by worm and man,
The half-starved workman, and the well-fed worm ;
What marbles, bronzes, pictures, parchments, books ;
What many-lobuled, thought-engendering brains ;
Lie with the gaping sea-shells in his maw,—
I, too, am silent ; for all language seems
A mockery, and the speech of man is vain.
O mariner, we look upon the waves,
And they rebuke our babbling. “Peace!” they
say,—
“Mortal, be still!” My noisy tongue is hushed,
And with my trembling finger on my lips
My soul exclaims in ecstasy—

Man at Wheel.

Belay !

Cabin Passenger.

Ah yes! "Delay," it calls; "nor haste to break
The charm of stillness with an idle word!"
O mariner, I love thee, for thy thought
Strides even with my own, nay, flies before,
Thou art a brother to the wind and wave;
Have they not music for thine ear as mine,
When the wild tempest makes thy ship his lyre,
Smiting a cavernous basso from the shrouds
And climbing up his gamut through the stays,
Through buntlines, bowlines, ratlines, till it shrills
An alto keener than the locust sings.
And all the great Æolian orchestra
Storms out its mad sonata in the gale?
Is not the scene a wondrous and—

Man at Wheel.

Avast!

Cabin Passenger.

Ah yes, a vast, a vast and wondrous scene!
I see thy soul is open as the day
That holds the sunshine in its azure bowl
To all the solemn glories of the deep.
Tell me, O mariner, dost thou never feel
The grandeur of thine office,—to control
The keel that cuts the ocean like a knife
And leaves a wake behind it like a seam
In the great shining garment of the world?

Man at Wheel.

Belay y'r jaw, y' swab ! y' hoss-marine !

(To the Captain.)

Ay, ay, sir ! Stiddy, sir ! Sou'wes' b' sou' !

November 10, 1864.



AT THE "ATLANTIC" DINNER.

December 15, 1874.

I SUPPOSE it's myself that you're making allusion to
And bringing the sense of dismay and confusion to.
Of course *some* must speak,—they are always selected
to,

But pray what's the reason that I am expected to ?
I'm not fond of wasting my breath as those fellows do
That want to be blowing for ever as bellows do ;
Their legs are uneasy, but why will you jog any
That long to stay quiet beneath the mahogany ?

Why, why call *me* up with your battery of flatteries ?
You say " He writes poetry,"—that's what the matter
is !

" It costs him no trouble—a penful of ink or two
And the poem is done in the time of a wink or two ;
As for thoughts—never mind—take the ones that lie
uppermost,

And the rhymes used by Milton and Byron and
Tupper most ;

The lines come so easy ! at one end he jingles 'em,
 At the other with capital letters he shingles 'em,—
 Why, the thing writes itself, and before he's half
 done with it
 He hates to stop writing, he has such good fun with
 it ! "

Ah, that is the way in which simple ones go about
 And draw a fine picture of things they don't know
 about !

We all know a kitten, but come to a catamount
 The beast is a stranger when grown up to that amount
 (A stranger we rather prefer shouldn't visit us,
 A *felis* whose advent is far from felicitous).
 The boy who can boast that his trap has just got a
 mouse

Mustn't draw it and write underneath "hippo-
 potamus ; "

Or say unveraciously, "This is an elephant"—
 Don't think, let me beg, these examples irrelevant—
 What they mean is just this—that a thing to be
 painted well
 Should always be something with which we're ac-
 quainted well.

You call on your victim for "things he has plenty
 of,—

Those copies of verses no doubt at least twenty of ;
 His desk is crammed full, for he always keeps
 writing 'em

And reading to friends as his way of delighting
 'em !"—

I tell you this writing of verses means business,—
 It makes the brain whirl in a vortex of dizziness :

You think they are scrawled in the languor of laziness—

I tell you they're squeezed by a spasm of craziness,
A fit half as bad as the staggering vertigos
That seize a poor fellow and down in the dirt he goes !

And therefore it chimes with the word's etymology
That the sons of Apollo are great on apology,
For the writing of verse is a struggle mysterious
And the gayest of rhymes is a matter that's serious.
For myself, I'm relied on by friends in extremities,
And I don't mind so much if a comfort to them it is ;
'Tis a pleasure to please, and the straw that can
 tickles us
Is a source of enjoyment, though slightly ridiculous.

I am up for a—something—and since I've begun
 with it,
I must give you a toast now before I have done with it.
Let me pump at my wits as they pumped the
 Cochituate
That moistened—it may be—the very last bit you ate.

—Success to our publishers, authors, and editors ;
To our debtors good luck,—pleasant dreams to our
 creditors ;
May the monthly grow yearly, till all we are groping
 for
Has reached the fulfilment we're all of us hoping
 for ;
Till the bore through the tunnel—it makes me let off
 a sigh
To think it may possibly ruin my prophecy—

Has been punned on so often 'twill never provoke
again
One mild adolescent to make the old joke again ;
Till abstinent, all-go-to-meeting society
Has forgotten the sense of the word inebriety ;
Till the work that poor Hannah and Bridget and
Phillis do
The humanised, civilised female gorillas do ;
Till the roughs, as we call them, grown loving and
dutiful,
Shall worship the true and the pure and the beautiful,
And, preying no longer as tiger and vulture do,
All read the "Atlantic" as persons of culture do !



"LUCY."

FOR HER GOLDEN WEDDING, OCTOBER 18, 1875.

"LUCY."—The old familiar name
Is now, as always, pleasant,
Its liquid melody the same
Alike in past or present ;
Let others call you what they will,
I know you'll let me use it ;
To me your name is Lucy still,
I cannot bear to lose it.

What visions of the past return
With Lucy's image blended !
What memories from the silent urn
Of gentle lives long ended !

What dreams of childhood's fleeting morn,
What starry aspirations,
That filled the misty days unborn
With fancy's coruscations !

Ah, Lucy, life has swiftly sped
From April to November ;
The summer blossoms all are shed
That you and I remember ;
But while the vanished years we share
With mingling recollections,
How all their shadowy features wear
The hue of old affections !

Love called you. He who stole your heart
Of sunshine half bereft us ;
Our household's garland fell apart
The morning that you left us ;
The tears of tender girlhood streamed
Through sorrow's opening sluices ;
Less sweet our garden's roses seemed,
Less blue its flower-de-luces.

That old regret is turned to smiles,
That parting sigh to greeting ;
I send my heart-throb fifty miles,—
Through every line 'tis beating ;
God grant you many and happy years,
Till when the last has crowned you
The dawn of endless day appears,
And Heaven is shining round you !

October 11, 1875.

HYMN

*For the Inauguration of the Statue of Governor
Andrew, Hingham, Oct. 7, 1875.*

BEHOLD the shape our eyes have known !
It lives once more in changeless stone ;
So looked in mortal face and form
Our guide through peril's deadly storm.

But hushed the beating heart we knew,
That heart so tender, brave, and true,
Firm as the rooted mountain rock,
Pure as the quarry's whitest block !

Not his beneath the blood-red star
To win the soldier's envied scar ;
Unarmed he battled for the right,
In Duty's never-ending fight.

Unconquered will, unslumbering eye,
Faith such as bids the martyr die,
The prophet's glance, the master's hand
To mould the work his foresight planned,

These were his gifts ; what Heaven had lent
For justice, mercy, truth, he spent,
First to avenge the traitorous blow,
And first to lift the vanquished foe.

Lo ! thus he stood ; in danger's strait
The pilot of the Pilgrim State !
Too large his fame for her alone,—
A nation claims him as her own !

A MEMORIAL TRIBUTE.

*Read at the Meeting held at Music Hall, February 8,
1876, in Memory of Dr. Samuel G. Howe.*

I.

LEADER of armies, Israel's God,
Thy soldier's fight is won !
Master, whose lowly path he trod,
Thy servant's work is done !

No voice is heard from Sinai's steep
Our wandering feet to guide ;
From Horeb's rock no waters leap ;
No Jordan's waves divide ;

No prophet cleaves our western sky
On wheels of whirling fire ;
No shepherds hear the song on high
Of heaven's angelic choir :

Yet here as to the patriarch's tent
God's angel comes a guest ;
He comes on heaven's high errand sent,
In earth's poor raiment drest.

We see no halo round his brow
Till love its own recalls,
And like a leaf that quits the bough,
The mortal vesture falls.

In autumn's chill declining day,
Ere winter's killing frost,
The message came ; so passed away
The friend our earth has lost.

Still, Father, in Thy love we trust,
Forgive us if we mourn
The saddening hour that laid in dust
His robe of flesh outworn.

II.

How long the wreck-strewn journey seems
To reach the far-off past
That woke his youth from peaceful dreams
With Freedom's trumpet-blast !

Along her classic hillsides rung
The Paynim's battle-cry !
And like a red-cross knight he sprung
For her to live or die.

No trustier service claimed the wreath
For Sparta's bravest son ;
No truer soldier sleeps beneath
The mound of Marathon ;

Yet not for him the warrior's grave
In front of angry foes ;
To lift, to shield, to help, to save,
The holier task he chose.

He touched the eyelids of the blind,
And lo ! the veil withdrawn,
As o'er the midnight of the mind
He led the light of dawn.

He asked not whence the fountains roll
No traveller's foot has found,
But mapped the desert of the soul
Untracked by sight or sound.

What prayers have reached the sapphire throne,
By silent fingers spelt,
For him who first through depths unknown
His doubtful pathway felt,

Who sought the slumbering sense that lay
Close shut with bolt and bar,
And showed awakening thought the ray
Of reason's morning star !

Where'er he moved, his shadowy form
The sightless orbs would seek,
And smiles of welcome light and warm
The lips that could not speak.

No laboured line, no sculptor's art,
Such hallowed memory needs ;
His tablet is the human heart,
His record loving deeds.

III.

The rest that earth denied is thine,—
Ah, is it rest? we ask,
Or, traced by knowledge more divine,
Some larger, nobler task?

Had but those boundless fields of blue
One darkened sphere like this ;
But what has heaven for thee to do
In realms of perfect bliss?

No cloud to lift, no mind to clear,
No rugged path to smooth,
No struggling soul to help and cheer,
No mortal grief to soothe !

Enough ; is there a world of love,
No more we ask to know ;
The hand will guide thy ways above
That shaped thy task below.



JOSEPH WARREN, M.D.

TRAINED in the holy art whose lifted shield
Wards off the darts a never-slumbering foe,
By hearth and wayside lurking, waits to throw,
Oppression taught his helpful arm to wield
The slayer's weapon : on the murderous field
The fiery bolt he challenged laid him low,
Seeking its noblest victim. Even so
The charter of a nation must be sealed !
The healer's brow the hero's honours crowned,
From lowliest duty called to loftiest deed.
Living, the oak-leaf wreath his temples bound ;
Dying, the conqueror's laurel was his meed,
Last on the broken ramparts' turf to bleed
Where Freedom's victory in defeat was found.

June 11, 1876.



OLD CAMBRIDGE.

JULY 3, 1875.

AND can it be you've found a place
Within this consecrated space
That makes so fine a show
For one of Rip Van Winkle's race?
And is it really so?
Who wants an old receipted bill?
Who fishes in the Frog-pond still?
Who digs last year's potato-hill?
That's what he'd like to know!

And were it any spot on earth
Save this dear home that gave him birth
Some scores of years ago,
He had not come to spoil your mirth
And chill your festive glow;
But round his baby-nest he strays,
With tearful eye the scene surveys,
His heart unchanged by changing days,—
That's what he'd have you know.

Can you whose eyes not yet are dim
Live o'er the buried past with him,
And see the roses blow
When white-haired men were Joe and Jim
Untouched by winter's snow?
Or roll the years back one by one
As Judah's monarch backed the sun,
And see the century just begun?—
That's what he'd like to know!

I come, but as the swallow dips,
 Just touching with her feather-tips
 The shining wave below
 To sit with pleasure-murmuring lips
 And listen to the flow
 Of Elmwood's sparkling Hippocrene,
 To tread once more my native green,
 To sigh unheard, to smile unseen,—
 That's what I'd have you know.

But since the common lot I've shared
 (We all are sitting "unprepared,"
 Like culprits in a row,
 Whose heads are down, whose necks are bared
 To wait the headsman's blow),
 I'd like to shift my task to you,
 By asking just a thing or two
 About the good old times I knew,—
 Here's what I want to know :

The yellow meetin'-house—can you tell
 Just where it stood before it fell
 Prey of the vandal foe,—
 Our dear old temple, loved so well,
 By ruthless hands laid low?
 Where, tell me, was the Deacon's pew?
 Whose hair was braided in a queue?
 (For there were pigtails not a few)—
 That's what I'd like to know.

The bell—can you recall its clang?
 And how the seats would slam and bang?
 The voices high and low?

The basso's trump before he sang?
The viol and its bow?
Where was it old Judge Winthrop sat?
Who wore the last three-cornered hat!
Was Israel Porter lean or fat?—
That's what I'd like to know.

Tell where the market used to be
That stood beside the murdered tree?
Whose dog to church would go?
Old Marcus Reemie, who was he?
Who were the brothers Snow?
Does not your memory slightly fail
About that great September gale
Whereof one told a moving tale,
As Cambridge boys should know?

When Cambridge was a simple town,
Say just when Deacon William Brown
(Last door in yonder row),
For honest silver counted down,
His groceries would bestow?—
For those were days when money meant
Something that jingled as you went,—
No hybrid like the nickle cent,
I'd have you all to know,

But quarter, ninepence, pistareen,
And fourpence happennies in between,
All metal fit to show,
Instead of rags in stagnant green,
The scum of debts we owe ;

How sad to think such stuff should be
Our Wendell's cure-all recipe,—
Not Wendell H., but Wendell P.,—
The one you all must know !

I question—but you answer not—
Dear me ! and have I quite forgot
How fivescore years ago,
Just on this very blessed spot,
The summer leaves below,
Before his homespun ranks arrayed
In green New England's elmbough shade
The great Virginian drew the blade
King George full soon should know !

O George the Third ! you found it true
Our George was more than *double you*,
For nature made him so.
Not much an empire's crown can do
If brains are scant and slow,—
Ah, not like that his laurel crown
Whose presence gilded with renown
Our brave old Academic town,
As all her children know !

So here we meet with loud acclaim
To tell mankind that here he came,
With hearts that throb and glow ;
Ours is a portion of his fame
Our trumpets needs must blow !
On yonder hill the Lion fell,
But here was chipped the eagle's shell,—
That little hatchet did it well,
As all the world shall know !

WELCOME TO THE NATIONS.

PHILADELPHIA, JULY 4, 1876.

BRIGHT on the banners of lily and rose
Lo ! the last sun of our century sets !
Wreath the black cannon that scowled on our foes,
All but her friendships the nation forgets !
All but her friends and their welcome forgets !
These are around her ; but where are her foes ?
Lo ! while the sun of her century sets, . . .
Peace with her garlands of lily and rose !

Welcome ! a shout like the war-trumpet's swell
Wakes the wild echoes that slumber around !
Welcome ! it quivers from Liberty's bell ;
Welcome ! the walls of her temple resound !
Hark ! the gray walls of her temple resound !
Fade the far voices o'er hillside and dell ;
Welcome ! still whisper the echoes around ;
Welcome ! still trembles on Liberty's bell !

Thrones of the continents ! isles of the sea !
Yours are the garlands of peace we entwine ;
Welcome, once more, to the land of the free,
Shadowed alike by the palm and the pine ;
Softly they murmur, the palm and the pine,
" Hushed is our strife, in the land of the free ; "
Over your children their branches entwine,
Thrones of the continents ! isles of the sea !

NOTES.

Page 13—"OLD IRONSIDES."

This was the popular name by which the frigate "Constitution" was known. The poem was first printed in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, at the time when it was proposed to break up the old ship as unfit for service.

Page 16—"THE CAMBRIDGE CHURCHYARD."

"The Goblet and the Sun" (Vas-Sol), sculptured on a freestone slab supported by five pillars, are the only designation of the family tomb of the Vassalls.

Page 65—"Thou calm, chaste scholar."

Charles Chauncy Emerson ; died May 9, 1836.

Page 65—"And thou, dear friend."

James Jackson, Jr., M.D. ; died March 28, 1834.

*Page 125—"Hark! the sweet bells renew their
welcome sound."*

The churches referred to in the lines which follow are—

I. "King's Chapel," the foundation of which was laid by Governor Shirley in 1749.

2. Brattle Street Church, consecrated in 1773. The completion of this edifice, the design of which included a spire, was prevented by the troubles of the Revolution, and its plain square tower presents nothing more attractive than a massive simplicity. In the front of this tower is still seen, half embedded in the brickwork, a cannon-ball, which was thrown from the American fortifications at Cambridge during the bombardment of the city, then occupied by the British troops.

3. The "Old South," first occupied for public worship in 1730.

4. Park Street Church, built in 1809, the tall white steeple of which is the most conspicuous of all the Boston spires.

5. Christ Church, opened for public worship in 1723, and containing a set of eight bells, until of late years the only chime in Boston.

Page 193—"AGNES."

The story of Sir Harry Frankland and Agnes Surraige is told in the ballad with a very strict adhesion to the facts. These were obtained from information afforded me by the Rev. Mr. Webster of Hopkinton, in company with whom I visited the Frankland Mansion in that town, then standing; from a very interesting Memoir, by the Rev. Elias Nason of Medford, not yet published; and from the manuscript diary of Sir Harry, or more properly Sir Charles Henry Frankland, now in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

At the time of the visit referred to old Julia was living, and on our return we called at the house

where she resided.* Her account is little more than paraphrased in the poem. If the incidents are treated with a certain liberality at the close of the fifth part, the essential fact, that Agnes rescued Sir Harry from the ruins after the earthquake, and their subsequent marriage as related, may be accepted as literal truth. So with regard to most of the trifling details which are given; they are taken from the record.

It is to be hoped that the Rev. Mr. Nason's Memoir will be published, that this extraordinary romance of our sober New England life may become familiar to that class of readers who prefer a rigorous statement to an embellished narrative. It will be found to contain many historical facts and allusions which add much to its romantic interest.

It is greatly to be regretted that the Frankland Mansion no longer exists. It was accidentally burned on the 23d of January 1858, a year or two after the first sketch of this ballad was written. A visit to it was like stepping out of the century into the years before the Revolution. A new house, similar in plan and arrangements to the old one, has been built upon its site, and the terraces, the clump of box, and the lilacs doubtless remain to bear witness to the truth of this story.

Since the above note was written the Rev. Mr. Nason's interesting Memoir of Sir Harry Frankland has been published.

* She was living June 10, 1861, when this ballad was published.

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